Famous Artists Course

Famous Artists Schools, Inc., Westport, Connecticut

Lettering

Lesson 17

Albert Dorne

Fred Ludekens

Norman Rockwell

Al Parker

Ben Stahl

Stevan Dohanos

Jon Whitcomb

Robert Fawcett

Peter Helck

George Giusti

Austin Briggs

Harold Von Schmidt

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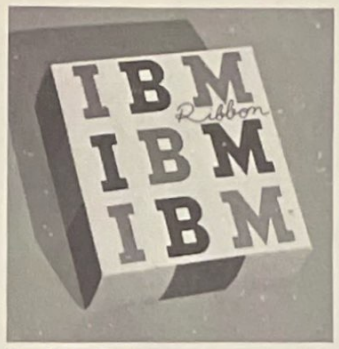
NEW! MIRACLE FORMULA—IDEAL FOR ALL CAR FINISHES!
INSTANT SIMONIZ
Genuine paste wax plus cleaner ...in a push button can
INSTANT SIMONIZ
Gives you a real Simoniz job without the hard work

Magazine advertising

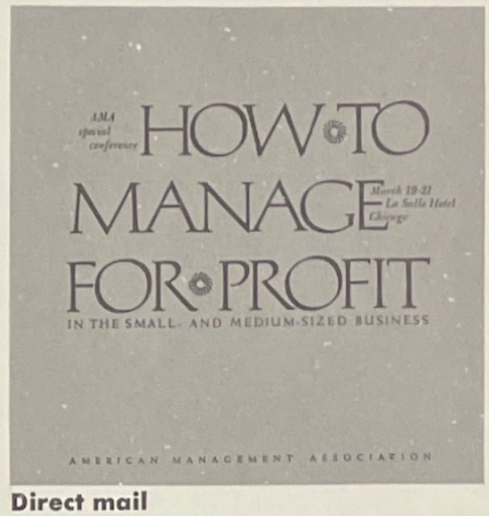


Packaging

Here we show you a few examples of the almost limitless kinds of lettering used in commercial art. These examples demonstrate how creatively lettering can be used and what an important role it plays in designing for advertising, publishing, and industry. In this lesson, our main emphasis will be on the fundamentals and craftsmanship of good lettering, but, at the same time, we want to prepare you so you can fully exploit the design opportunities of lettering awaiting you in the remaining lessons of the Course.

Painted signs

Newspaper advertising


AMA special conference
HOW TO MANAGE FOR PROFIT
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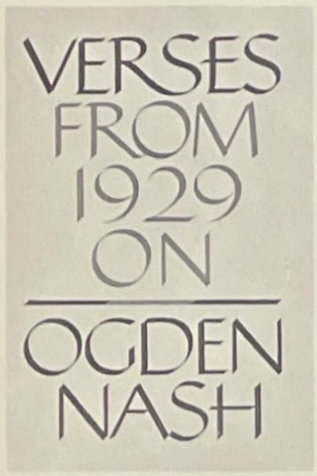
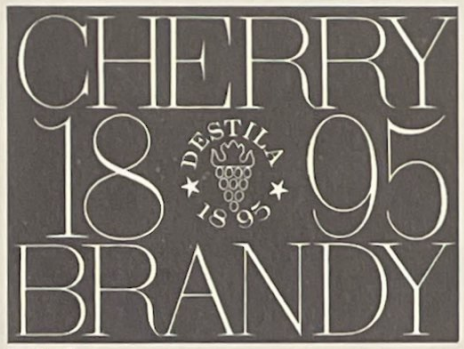
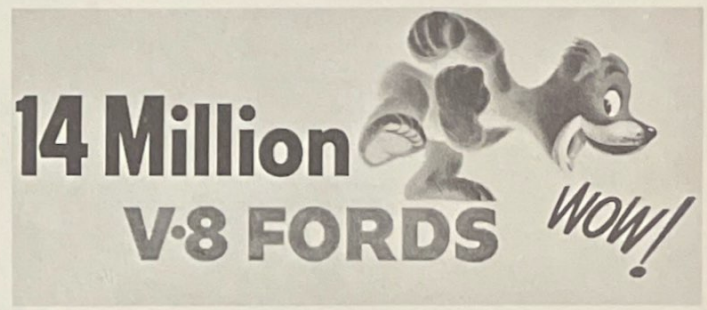
Direct mail



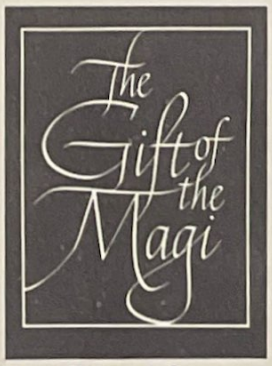
Book jackets



Labels



Posters



Greeting cards

Magazines

House organs

Trademarks

Record albums

Magazine covers

Television

Credits: Packaging—designed by Paul Rand for International Business Machines Corp.; magazine—courtesy Good Housekeeping; greeting card—courtesy Western Advertising; book jacket—courtesy Little, Brown and Co.

Lettering

Acknowledgment is made to Frank Conley, the distinguished letterer and designer, for his contributions to this lesson both as a lettering artist and as a consultant.

A good knowledge of lettering can open many doors for the artist getting started in commercial art.

Leaf through any magazine, newspaper, or booklet — look at any of the thousands of packages in a supermarket or a drugstore — or at television commercials, billboards, calendars, book jackets, greeting cards, catalogs, show cards, and circulars — and you will see that a good part of almost all these things is devoted to the printed word. For almost every one of the countless advertisements, package designs, or other kinds of printed matter you see every day there was first a design or layout — and it was worked on by an artist who could letter. No wonder the artist who can letter well has a real advantage in securing a studio job or getting free-lance work from local stores and industry. Lettering is the great door opener to the art profession.

Many members of your Faculty were accomplished lettering men in the early stages of their careers — and all of them continue to have a keen interest in lettering as it relates to their art. Al Parker designs the lettering for the story openings he illustrates. In addition to his many other artistic achievements, Albert Dorne earned a living at lettering when he started and is an authority on lettering and typography in advertising and books. Jon Whitcomb entered the art profession by lettering signs for theatres. Fred Ludekens has designed and art-directed some of the most effective posters and advertisements in the country, and Robert Fawcett was a lettering artist as well as an illustrator at the beginning of his career.

More and more today the commercial artist in every field is called upon to consider his drawings in relationship to the layout of the entire page, and this, of course, is easier if you have a good knowledge of and feeling for the design of the printed word. Certainly, ability in lettering proves its worth to the free lancer, who is often called upon to create the whole layout, complete with art and lettering. Your skill as a letterer can lead to a career as a layout artist, designer or an art director — or, if your bent is in another direction, this skill may very well help you start earning money sooner and help keep you going until you have established yourself in your chosen field of art. Lettering ability will come in handy in more ways than you can imagine.

Beauty and legibility

Skill in lettering is not only a valuable asset to any artist — it is a source of many rich satisfactions. Probably the greatest of these is the aesthetic thrill you feel as you see the graceful shapes of letters come into being under your hand, forming words which sensitively interpret the character of the layout and the message of the copy. In many pieces of lettering you have an opportunity to vary the traditional letter forms and create your own personal interpretation. As you will learn from this lesson, the numerous styles of alphabets, in various sizes and weights, give you almost unlimited range for self-expression.

Never let the charm or originality of your letters interfere with their ability to communicate. The principal reason people read is to gain information, and by making your lettering very legible you make it easier for the reader to understand the message you have for him. Advertisers and publishers are seeking people who can help them tell their story to the public in lettering that is both clear and pleasing. Here is a rich opportunity for the artist who can combine beauty and legibility in his lettering. Mind you, there is no conflict between these two qualities, for our most beautiful alphabets are also our most easily read.

Before you can create attractive and readable lettering styles you must learn the fundamentals of design and readability. You can do this best by limiting yourself for the time being to the study of a few of the finest and most widely used alphabets, and to the principles of spacing letters, words, and lines which we will teach you here. We will also tell you the methods and materials used by most good lettering artists. We will show examples of the creative liberties you may take in lettering, but we will wait until later lessons to explain the imaginative use of lettering and type. So consider this lesson as the first and most basic step in the use of lettering.

Layout lettering and finished lettering

There are two broad fields of lettering in which you may work — layout lettering and finished lettering. We have divided the lesson into two corresponding sections.

In the first section we will teach you the fundamentals of layout lettering. This is the kind of lettering you will do on layouts for advertisements, magazines, booklets, catalogs, television, and other forms of the visual and graphic arts.

The second section of our lesson will be devoted to showing you how to make finished lettering for reproduction. It also includes instruction on lettering show cards.

To the artist, lettering means drawing letters with some kind of pencil, pen, or brush. Another way to put letters on a page is by printing them with type. The art and craft of designing with type or setting type is called typography. Lettering and typography deal with the same fundamentals of the design of letters and organizing them on the page through the proper use of space between letters, words, and lines of words. So what you learn about lettering will be equally valuable in your study of typography in later lessons. In this lesson, then, we use the word lettering in its broadest sense to include all methods of putting words on paper.

You may think that if lettering can be as rewarding and creative as we have described it, that it must also be very complex and difficult to learn. On first examination it does appear complex, but if you follow step by step the methods we teach, you will find it to be basically rather simple. You will see and appreciate this simplicity most readily in layout lettering, for here the tool you use does a great deal to help you form the letters. You will soon be surprised how easily and quickly you can letter if you practice regularly with the correct tools. So turn the page now and start exploring lettering — one of the most fascinating and practical forms of art.

Layout lettering

Layout lettering is the term we use to describe all lettering on layouts. A layout is a preliminary sketch or design which shows where the headlines, printed matter (called copy), illustrations, trademarks, and other elements are to go in the advertisement or on the page, and what size or character each of these elements is to have. Usually the layout is done in pencil, but for special purposes any medium may be used. The layout serves as a guide for making the finished lettering as well as the other finished art, and the typesetter also follows it when setting the type.

On the facing page is an example of layout lettering in an advertising layout. Underneath this you see the finished lettering and the completed advertisement as it was reproduced in a magazine. In this first section of the lesson we will show you how to draw the lettering for layouts. Before we do this, however, we must explain some fundamental facts about the alphabet.

The basic alphabet

We see all about us seemingly countless styles of lettering. Actually, all of these have a great deal in common. All alphabets are but variations of one simple alphabet which we call the basic alphabet here.

When we say alphabet we mean the 26 capital letters, the 26 small letters, and the 10 figures, 0 to 9. Caps is the term professionals use for capital letters. The small letters are called lower case, because a typesetter keeps them in the lower case of his type rack. He keeps the caps in the upper case, and so they are sometimes referred to as upper case. Fix the difference between caps and lower-case letters firmly in your mind and don't make the typical beginner's mistake of confusing the two and using them indiscriminately when you do lettering.

Roman and gothic

It is most important for you to learn how to draw each cap and lower-case letter and number of the basic alphabet before you try variations. Actually, all the variations of the alphabet are divided into just two groups – the roman and the gothic.

Letters are made of parts called strokes. In roman alphabets some of the strokes are thick and some are thin. The type which you are now reading is a roman alphabet called Baskerville. Notice the difference between the thick and thin parts or strokes of the letters.

In contrast, all of the strokes of gothic letters are about the same thickness. The headings and subheadings on this page are set in Spartan Black, a gothic alphabet.

A word about the simple method we shall use here to help you learn lettering. First we will teach you the basic alphabet, then we will demonstrate how to make it into the "thick and thin" roman alphabet. After that we will explain how to make the gothic alphabet. We will also teach you script, which you already know to some extent because you can write. Learn these three simple kinds of lettering, roman, gothic and script, and you'll be surprised at how many different alphabets you can letter with a little research.

In the graphic arts and printing, a short word for alphabet is face, and we'll use it often. Baskerville, we have seen, is a roman face; some of the other roman faces are Caslon, Bodoni, and Garamond. A few of the gothic faces are Standard, Venus, and Franklin Gothic.

You will find it very helpful to have a type book which displays the many different faces available. Type books can be purchased through your bookdealer. Many printers and typesetters supply them free to their customers.

Materials for layout lettering

Layout paper comes in pads of various sizes. The most widely used is 19 by 24 inches, which is large enough for full-page newspaper and double-page magazine ads. Another popular size is 14 by 17 inches. For the purpose of this lesson the best kind is visualizing paper, a thin white bond. It is transparent enough to easily see a tracing underneath. Regular bond paper is seldom used because it is hard to see through, but it is tough and useful when you have to work in opaque or transparent water color. Do not use the smooth yellow tracing papers and vellums – they are fine for some purposes but not for layouts. Each company has its own special types of layout papers. Experience will teach you which is best for different purposes. (Except where we indicate otherwise, the examples in this lesson were done with pencil on visualizing paper.)

Most layout lettering is done directly on the visualizing pad. Occasionally, when doing a very finished and detailed layout, some letterers prefer to work on eight or ten sheets tacked to the drawing board. Never work on a single sheet placed directly on your drawing board.

All kinds of pencils can be used in making layouts. For large letters you will want a soft and medium-grade sketching or carpenter's pencil with a broad flat lead. Then, for medium-size letters, you'll want one or more round pencils with fairly large round leads, generally called layout pencils, though each company gives them a different name. Of course, you'll also have use for regular drawing pencils of varying degrees of hardness for the smaller letters. For study and practice for this lesson we recommend that you use lead pencils. For really black letters you can use charcoal pencils. Later on, you may want to try such novel mediums as felt pens, brushes, grease pencils, and pastels.

In layouts where large letters are to be in color, use Nupastel sticks. Do smaller letters with colored pencils.

Layouts must be true and accurate in size. So use a good steel-edge T-square and a triangle to square your layouts and, for accurate dimensions, a ruler marked with inches and picas. A pica is a printer's measurement you will use often in layouts. Six picas equal one inch.

A pair of dividers is useful for dividing a line into equal spaces and scaling up dimensions from a layout. Just how this is done will be explained later in the lesson.

Erasers such as Artgum, ruby, and, especially, kneaded erasers are a must. When a job is finished and cleaned up, spray it with a fixative to keep it from smudging.

You learn to letter by lettering

Layout with layout lettering

The fastest way to get there

is to **FLY**...the finest way to

fly is by **DOUGLAS**

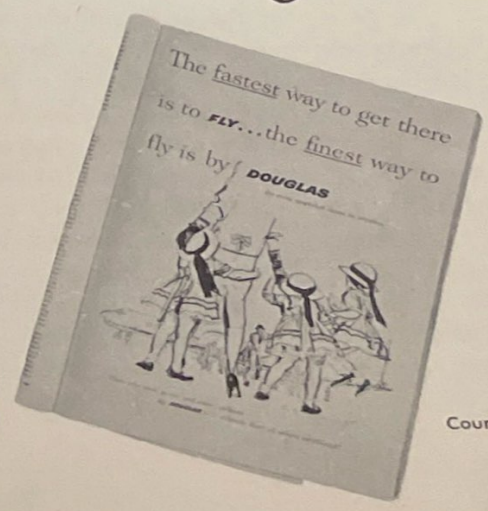
Finished lettering

The fastest way to get there

is to **FLY**...the finest way to

fly is by **DOUGLAS**

Completed advertisement



Courtesy Douglas Aircra

Capital letters

A B C D E F G H I J K

L M N O P Q R S T U

V W X Y Z + & ?

Lower-case letters

a b c d e f g h i j k l m

n o p q r s t u v w x y z

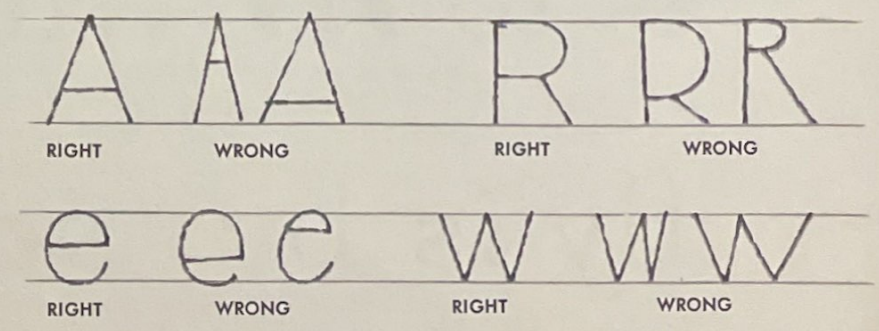
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

The basic alphabet

We call the alphabet on this page the basic alphabet because it represents the basic framework of all our many roman and gothic faces.

The letters of the basic alphabet are stripped down to their essential elements. For example, the A is made of two diagonals joined at the top and connected in the middle by a crossbar — you cannot simplify it more and still have it an A. The B consists of a vertical line and two round loops, and the other letters are equally simple. Study each of the caps, lower-case letters, and numbers until you know their construction by heart.

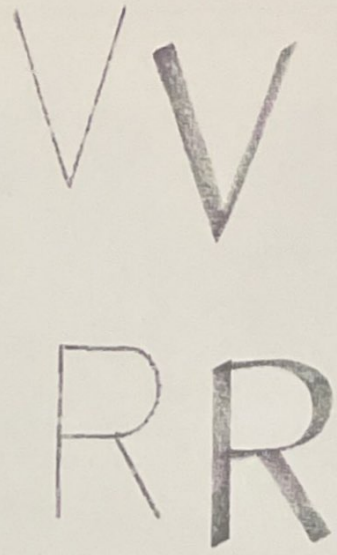
The first step, when you practice lettering, is to draw light parallel guide lines with your pencil and T-square to establish the height of the letters. The main body of the lower-case letters is about two-thirds as high as the caps. The letters on this page were drawn with a sharp-pointed pencil.



Each letter in a particular alphabet should be consistent in structure and style with all the rest. Here we have picked four letters to show you some typical mistakes in drawing letters for this particular alphabet. Similar mistakes may be made with all the other letters if you are careless.

Courtesy Trier-Kommission, Trier, Germany

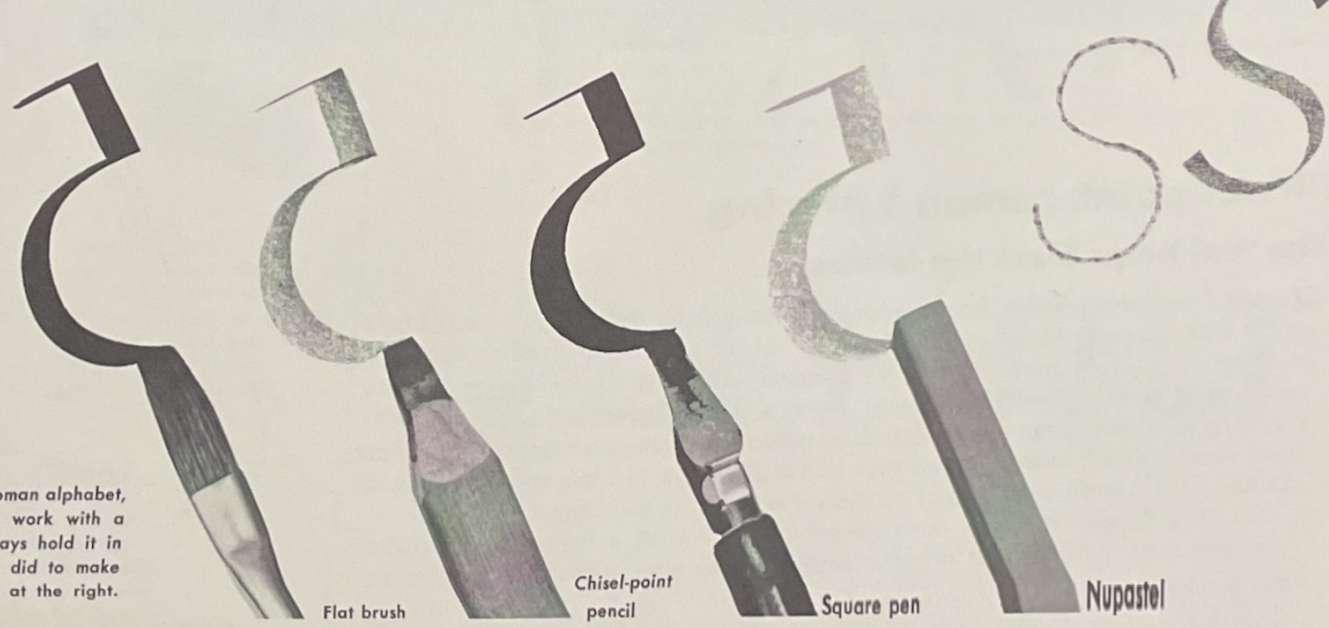
The capital letters of our alphabet were developed by the Romans. Notice the characteristic thick and thin strokes with which they made their letters.



The roman alphabet

It was the ancient Romans who perfected and gave us our capital letters. These classic lettering artists carved their letters in stone, but first, as a guide, they painted them on it. They used a flat brush, which they always held at the same angle. When this flat brush was moved sideways, naturally it made a thin stroke, and when it was moved up or down it made a thick stroke. After the letters were painted, the artists cut away the painted stone with a chisel.

The thick-and-thin principle which the Romans used is illustrated below by examples of strokes made with four of the most widely used flat lettering tools. By holding these flat-pointed tools always in the same position and moving them in different directions as shown, you will see clearly why some of the strokes will be thick and others thin. At the right we show you four letters of our basic alphabet and how they look when they are drawn as roman letters.



In learning to draw the roman alphabet, we recommend that you work with a flat-pointed tool and always hold it in the same position, as we did to make the demonstration strokes at the right.

Three kinds of letters

LETTERING Strokes

Basic letters: Here is a line of lettering using the basic alphabet, drawn with a sharp-pointed pencil.

LETTERING Strokes

Chisel-point roman letters: Here are the same words as above, but this time they have been drawn with a chisel-point pencil. Notice that it naturally produces strokes that are thin or thick in the correct places when the pencil is held at the same angle.

LETTERING Strokes

Built-up letters: You can also form roman letters with a sharp-pointed pencil or brush, building up the thick parts gradually with many strokes where the chisel point would form them with a single stroke. At times you may find it more convenient to build up your letters this way.

Hold your chisel-point pencil like this when you letter.

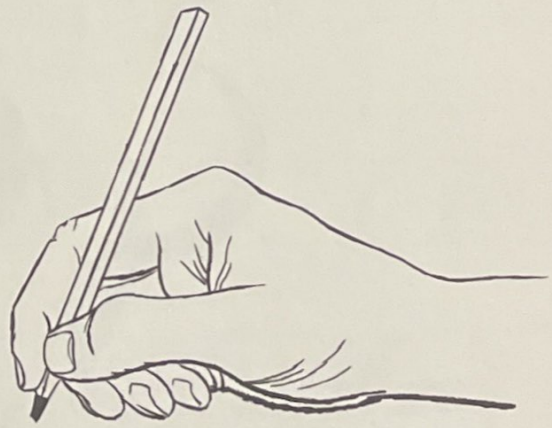
Chisel-point roman lettering

The tool helps form the letters

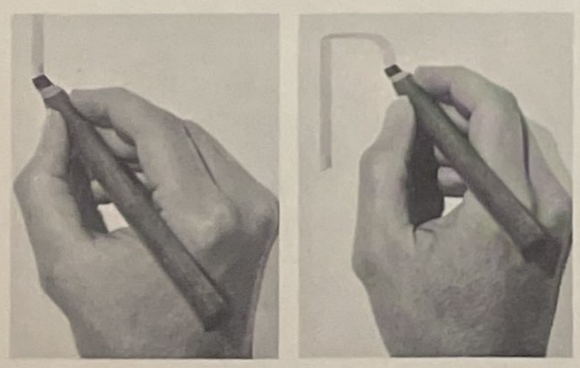
The ideal tool to use when learning to draw the roman alphabet is a carpenter's pencil with a square chisel point. The diagrams on the facing page explain how to make this point, and the correct position for using it. By always holding your pencil so the chisel point forms about a thirty-degree angle with the horizontal guide line, your thick and thin strokes will automatically come where they should. Don't make the mistake of twisting and turning your hand as the strokes turn — hold your pencil at the same angle at all times.

Do your layout lettering on a visualizing pad with a firm working surface. Sharpen your pencil often on your sandpaper so your strokes will always have sharp, clean edges.

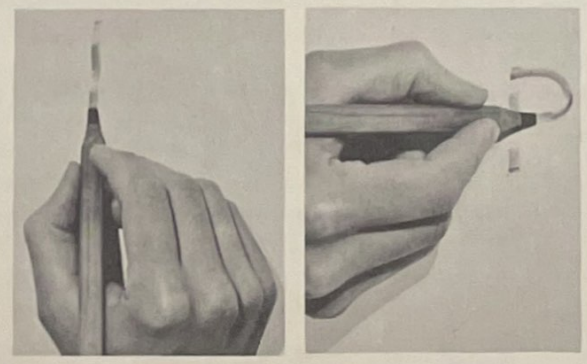
Sit comfortably at your drawing board with your work directly in front of you. Don't bend too close — at all times you should be able to see all of your work and relate each letter to the entire layout. Keep your pad straight on the board unless you are touching up, in which case you may prefer to turn the pad.



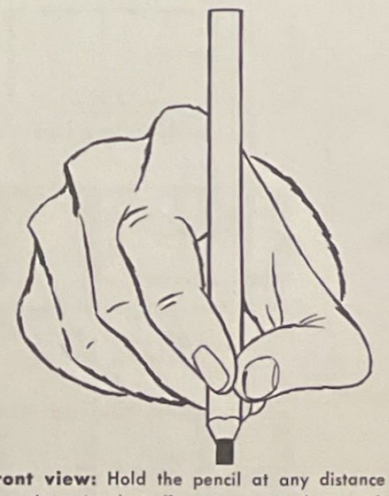
Side view: There is no set way you must hold your pencil — so hold it in a way that feels natural and comfortable to you. The position shown above is a good one because the pencil is at a sharp enough angle to the paper to make strokes with crisp, clean edges.



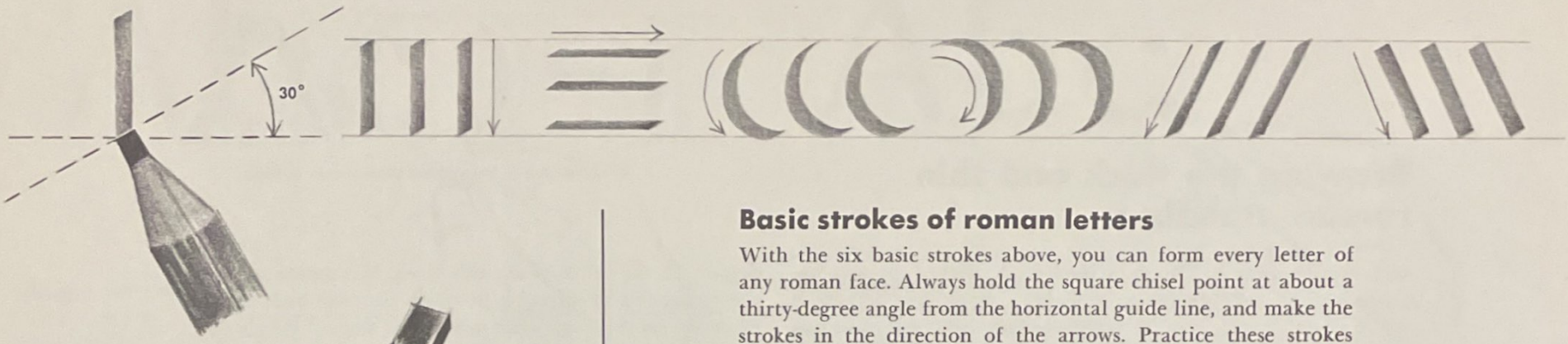
Right: Always hold the chisel point at the same angle, no matter what the direction of your stroke may be.

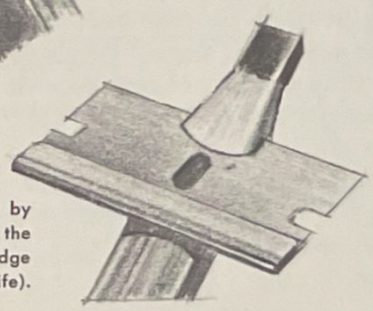


Wrong: The angle of the pencil should not be changed for different strokes or your thicks and thins will not come in the right places.



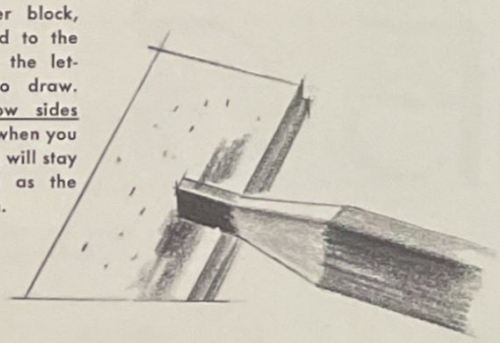
Front view: Hold the pencil at any distance from the point that allows you to apply enough pressure to make your strokes as dark as you need. The point should rest flat on the paper.

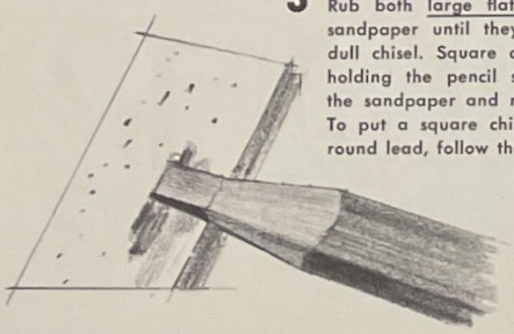




1 Sharpen your pencil by first cutting away the wood with a single-edge razor (or a sharp knife).

2 On a sandpaper block, sharpen the lead to the exact width for the letters you are to draw. Keep the narrow sides parallel so that, when you letter, the strokes will stay the same width as the lead wears down.

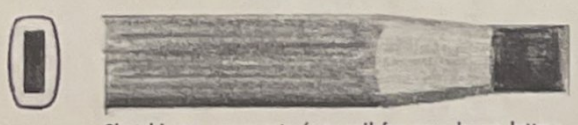




3 Rub both large flat sides on the sandpaper until they taper like a dull chisel. Square off the end by holding the pencil straight up on the sandpaper and rubbing lightly. To put a square chisel point on a round lead, follow these same steps.

Useful types of pencils for chisel-point lettering

End view Front view



Sketching or carpenter's pencil for very large letters

Small sketching or carpenter's pencil for large letters

Round or layout pencil for medium letters

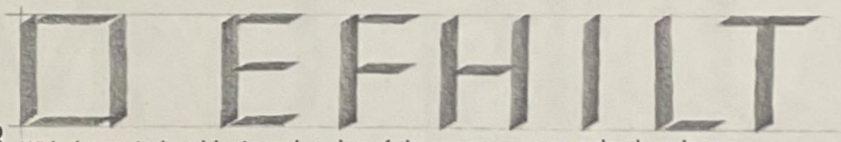
Regular drawing pencil for small letters

Basic strokes of roman letters

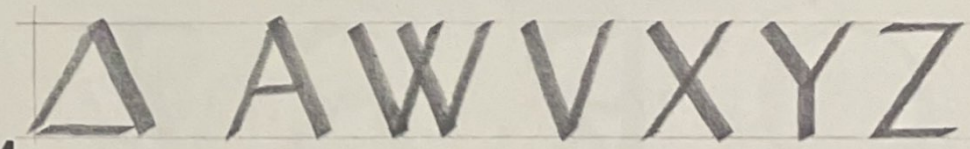
With the six basic strokes above, you can form every letter of any roman face. Always hold the square chisel point at about a thirty-degree angle from the horizontal guide line, and make the strokes in the direction of the arrows. Practice these strokes individually and in combination, as we explain below.

1 Keeping your chisel point at a thirty-degree angle, draw a square, a triangle, and a circle.

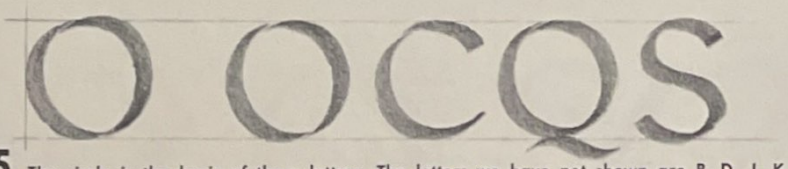
2 In drawing the square, triangle, and circle, you made the six basic strokes you will use to letter all roman alphabets.



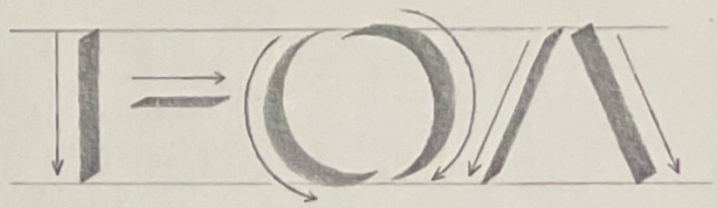
3 With the vertical and horizontal strokes of the square you can make these letters.



4 The triangle gives you the two different diagonals and the horizontal needed for these letters.



5 The circle is the basis of these letters. The letters we have not shown are B, D, J, K, M, N, P, R, and U, which are formed by various combinations of the six basic strokes.



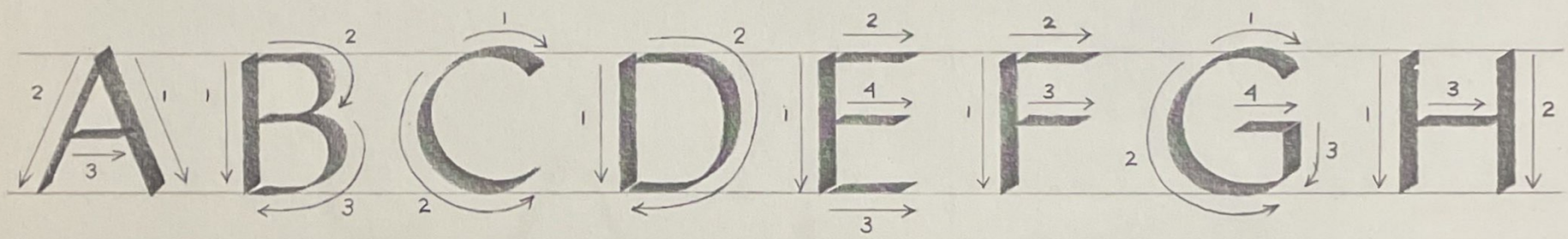
Remember the six basic strokes of the roman alphabet.

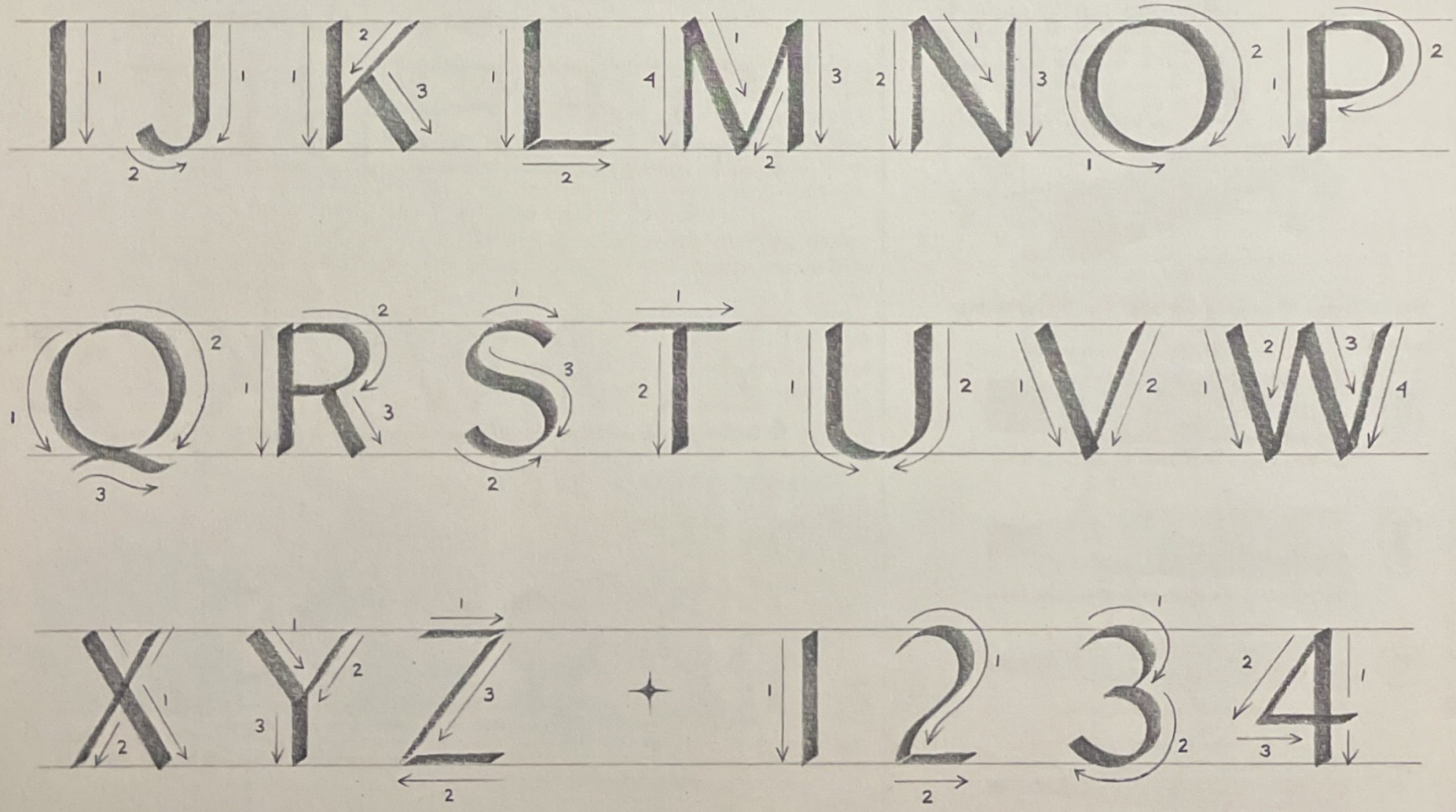
Drawing the thick and thin roman alphabet

Here we show you how to draw the basic strokes of the very important thick and thin roman alphabet — important because it is the alphabet upon which every one of the hundreds of roman faces such as Caslon, Bodoni, and Garamond are constructed. It will be a simple matter to render any of the roman faces when you know each character or letter of this alphabet.

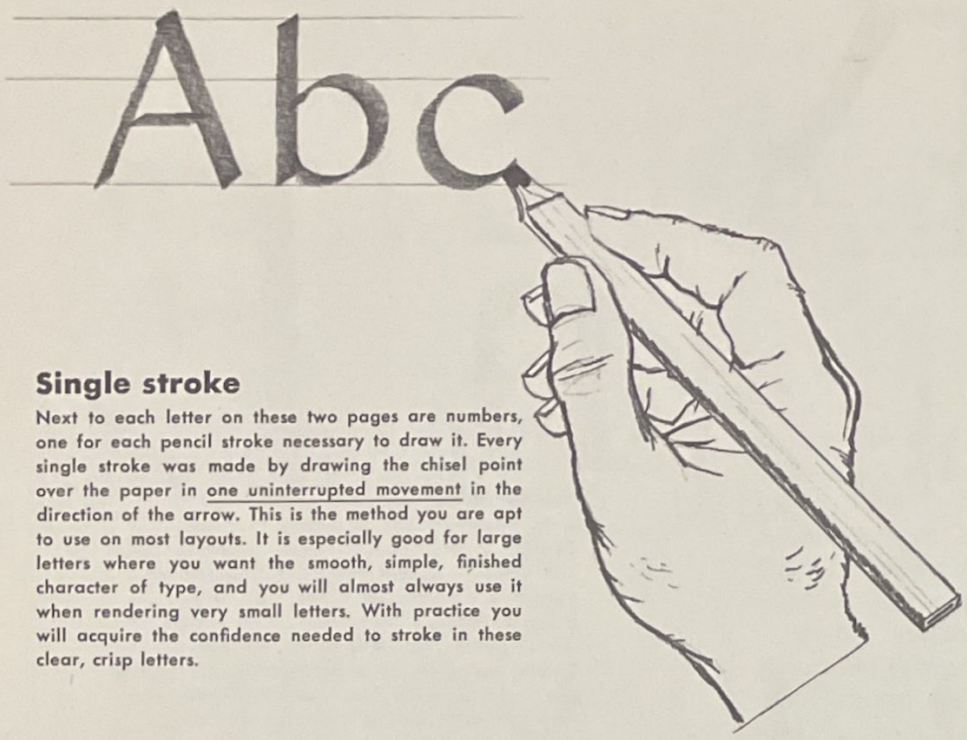
The thick and thin alphabet is made by drawing the basic alphabet of page 6 with a chisel-point pencil. You will use only the six basic strokes shown on page 9 and above. Remember to hold the front edge of the chisel point at an angle of thirty degrees to the horizontal guide lines. Numbered arrows show the sequence and direction in which to make each stroke. The examples on this page were made with a small sketching pencil sanded down to a chisel point one-eighth of an inch wide. They are reproduced the same size they were drawn.

Draw two guide lines for the caps and a third line as a guide for the tops of the lower-case letters. These letters are about two-thirds as high as caps. We say about because there is no set rule for the proportion of lower-case letters to caps. It varies slightly with different faces.



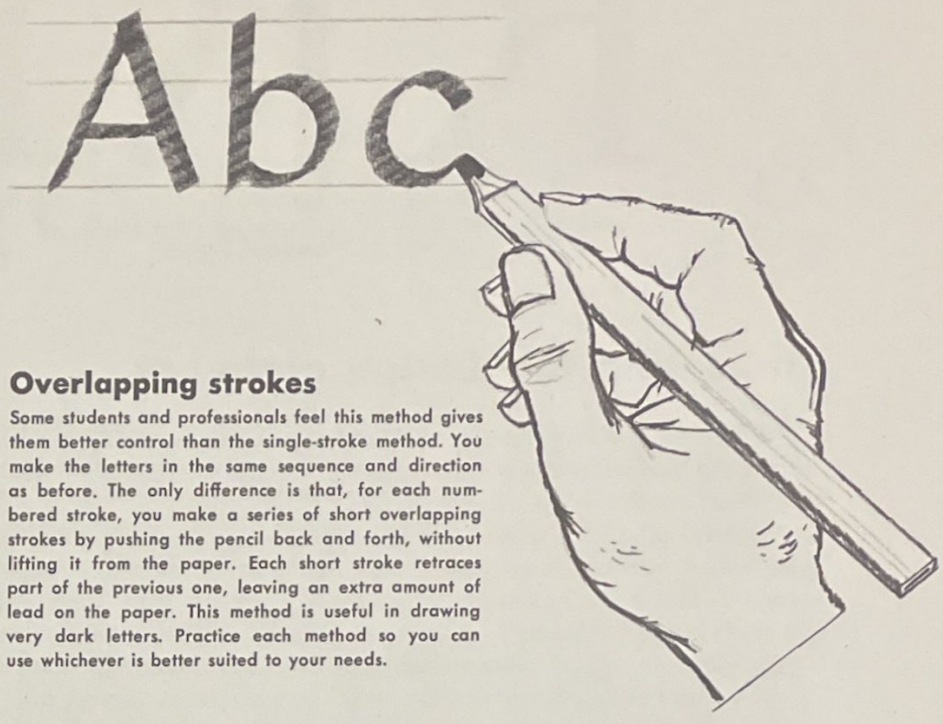


Two methods of rendering



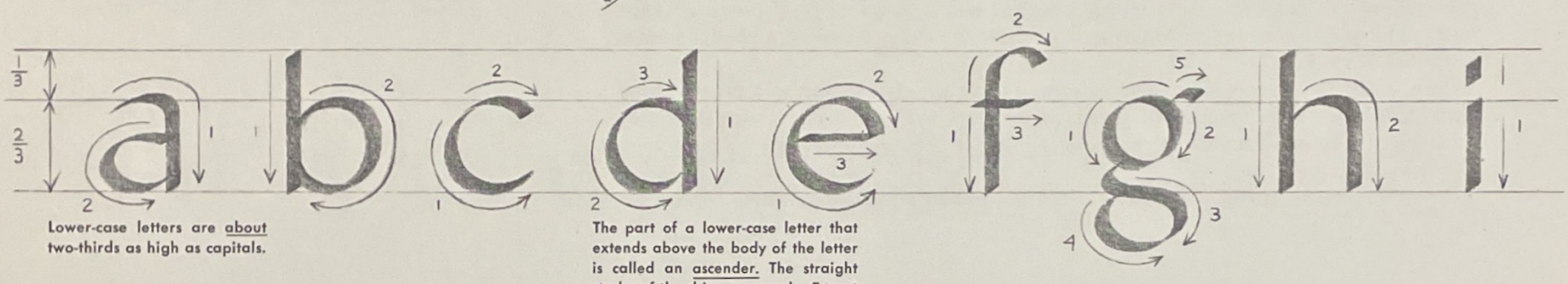
Single stroke

Next to each letter on these two pages are numbers, one for each pencil stroke necessary to draw it. Every single stroke was made by drawing the chisel point over the paper in one uninterrupted movement in the direction of the arrow. This is the method you are apt to use on most layouts. It is especially good for large letters where you want the smooth, simple, finished character of type, and you will almost always use it when rendering very small letters. With practice you will acquire the confidence needed to stroke in these clear, crisp letters.



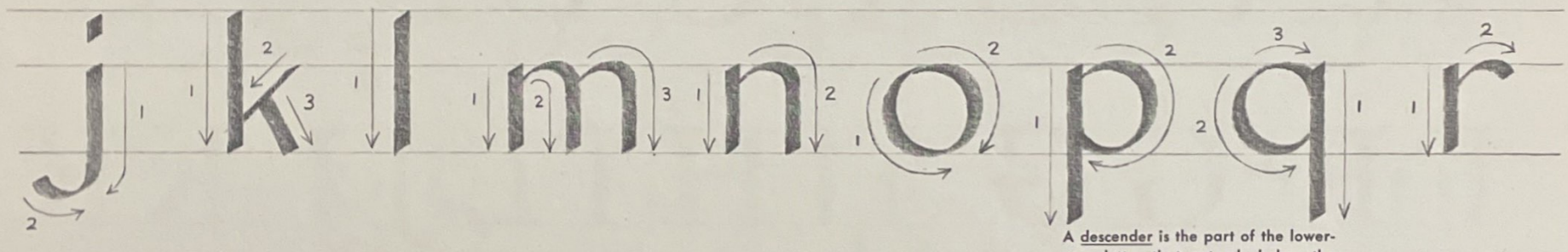
Overlapping strokes

Some students and professionals feel this method gives them better control than the single-stroke method. You make the letters in the same sequence and direction as before. The only difference is that, for each numbered stroke, you make a series of short overlapping strokes by pushing the pencil back and forth, without lifting it from the paper. Each short stroke retraces part of the previous one, leaving an extra amount of lead on the paper. This method is useful in drawing very dark letters. Practice each method so you can use whichever is better suited to your needs.

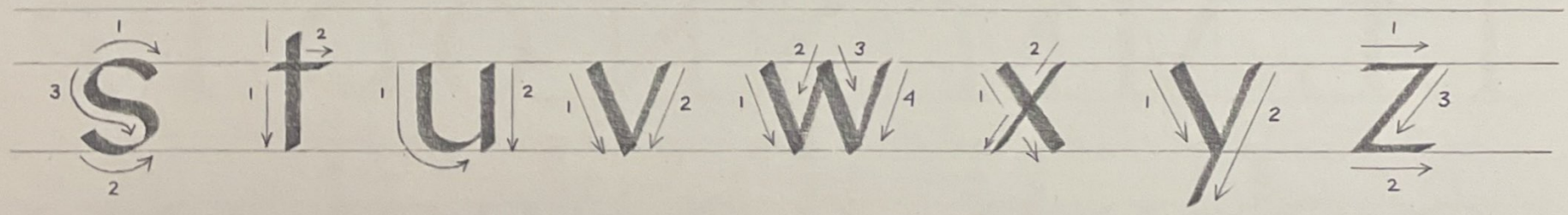


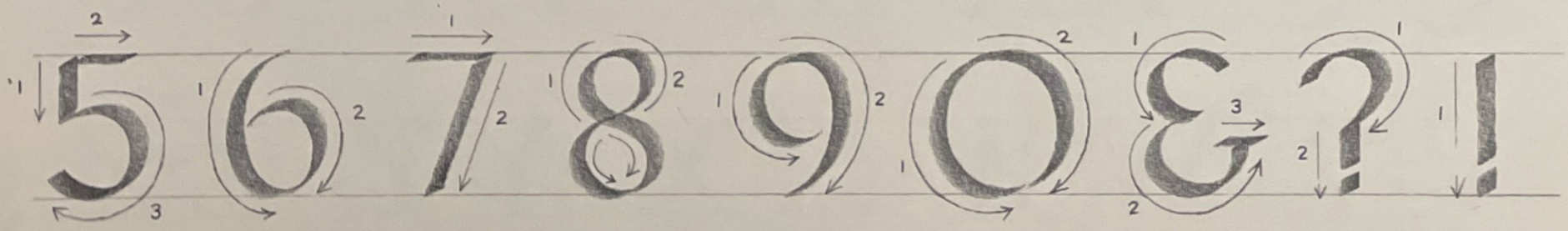
Lower-case letters are about two-thirds as high as capitals.

The part of a lower-case letter that extends above the body of the letter is called an ascender. The straight stroke of the d is an example. Except in the t, ascenders are as high as the capital letters are.



A descender is the part of the lower-case letter that extends below the body — about as far as the ascender rises. The verticals of the p and q are examples of descenders.

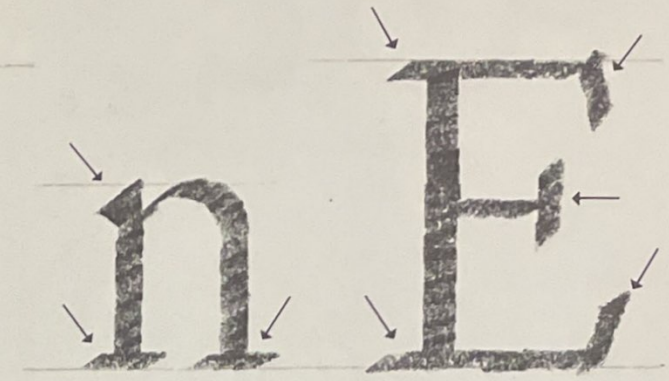




This is a finished Caslon letter.

This is the thick and thin chisel-point letter you have been making.

Now add the serifs and you have the pencil indication of a Caslon R.



Making serifs: (*Left*) The arrows point to the serifs, which are each made with one stroke. The chisel-point pencil does not make serifs identical with those of Caslon type, but they are close enough in character for layout work. (*Right*) The E has the principal serifs used on the capital letters of Caslon. The serifs on the left side of the E were made with the same stroke as the upper and lower horizontal bars. The other three serifs were each made with an individual short stroke.

Indicating the Caslon alphabet

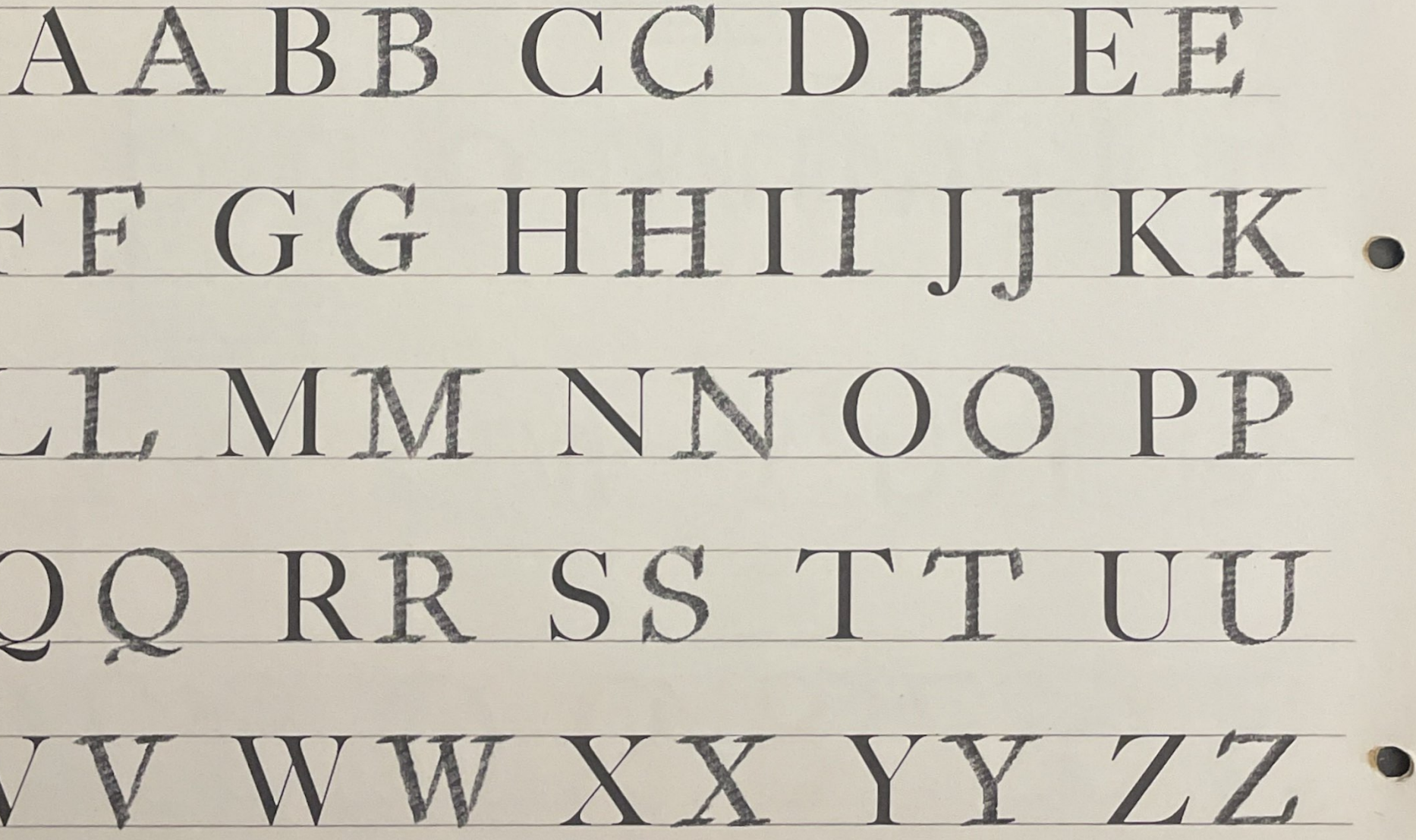
Here you see how to make the thick and thin letters into Caslon, the most widely used of all the roman faces, by adding serifs. Serifs are the small strokes at the end of the main strokes or stems of a letter.

We have selected Caslon for your study because it is the most widely used roman face and it also conforms most closely to the thick and thin strokes made with a chisel point. It is also the face which has most in common with other roman faces because its serifs are not extreme — they are average in thickness, pointedness, and length.

On these two pages, next to each finished Caslon letter we show how to indicate it with a chisel point. Note that the pencil indications interpret only the general characteristics of the finished Caslon letters; they do not attempt to copy them in every detail. The purpose of layout lettering is to show the character of an alphabet with a minimum of work.

Here is the first exception to our rule of holding the chisel point at a thirty-degree angle. When you draw the thin diagonals or verticals, as in the A or N, turn the chisel point slightly to avoid undue thickness in the stroke. For all lower-case Caslon, keep your pencil at thirty degrees.

The sequence of strokes is the same as for the roman alphabet on pages 10 and 11.



a a b b c c d d e e f f g g

h h i i j j k k l l m m

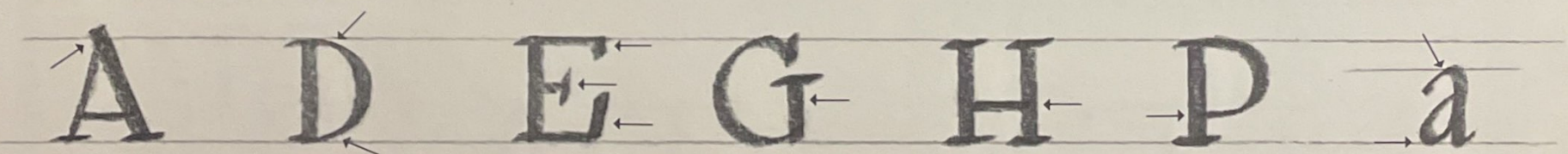
n n o o p p q q r r s s t t

u u v v w w x x y y z z

1 1 2 2 3 3 4 4 5 5 6 6

7 7 8 8 9 9 & & ? ? ! !

Don't make these mistakes



Heavy diagonal stroke too high above thin one.

Curve sweeps in too soon and makes enclosed space too small.

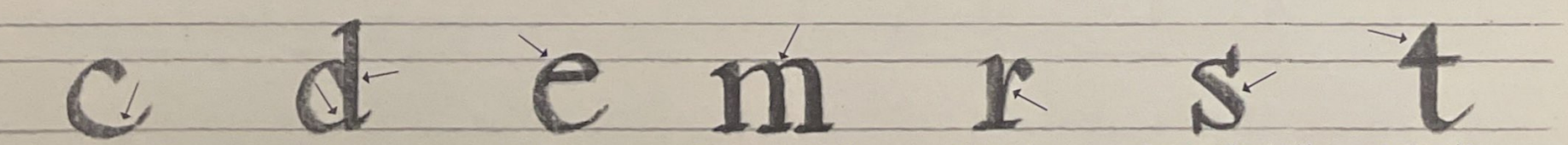
Serifs are inconsistent in size.

Vertical stroke too high.

Crossbar too low.

Bottom curve too low.

Curves too sharp.



Bottom curve too wide.

Curves do not join vertical correctly.

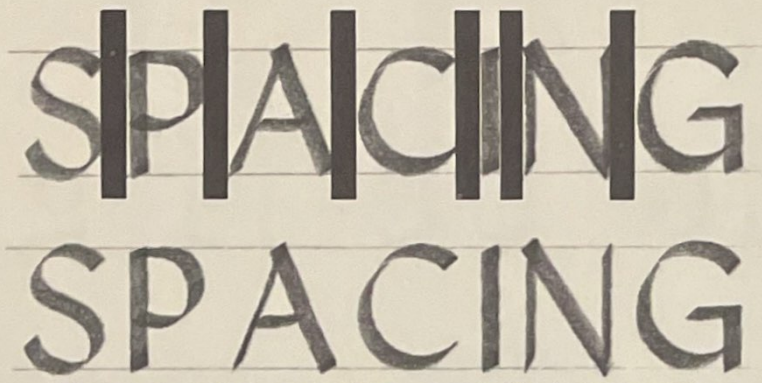
Enclosed space too small.

Curve joins middle stem too high. Spaces between verticals are not equal.

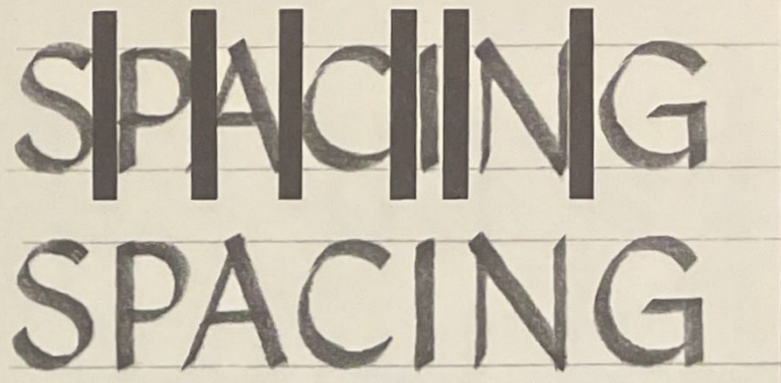
Short stroke too low.

Center stroke should be curved, not straight.

Serif too big.



Wrong — mechanical spacing: Here a word with identical spaces between the letters is reproduced twice. In the top line black bars of equal width show that all the letters are the same distance apart. Examine the word without the bars and notice how uneven and spotty it looks. There is too much space between the P, A, and C, while the I and N look crowded.



Right — optical spacing: Here the word is spaced optically — using the eye, not a ruler, as a guide — to give a good over-all pattern. There are neither holes nor dark areas. Study the black bars in the top line to see how the spacing is adjusted to suit each pair of letters.

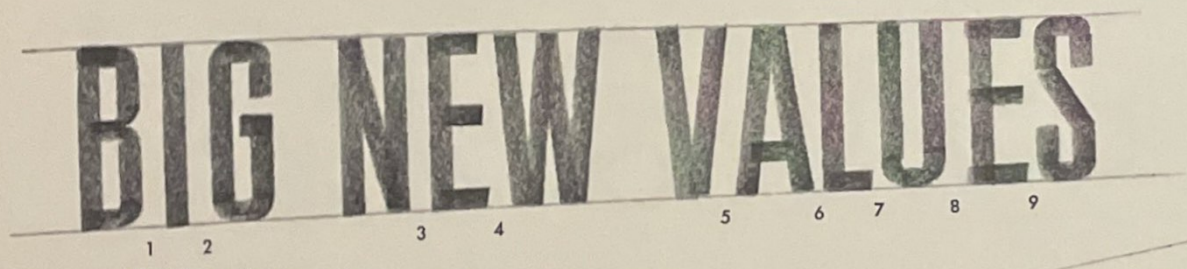
Here is another way to consider the spaces between the letters. It makes allowances for the irregular shapes of letters. While the spaces are not equal in width, they are visually equal. To the eye, area A = B = C = D = E = F.

Spacing

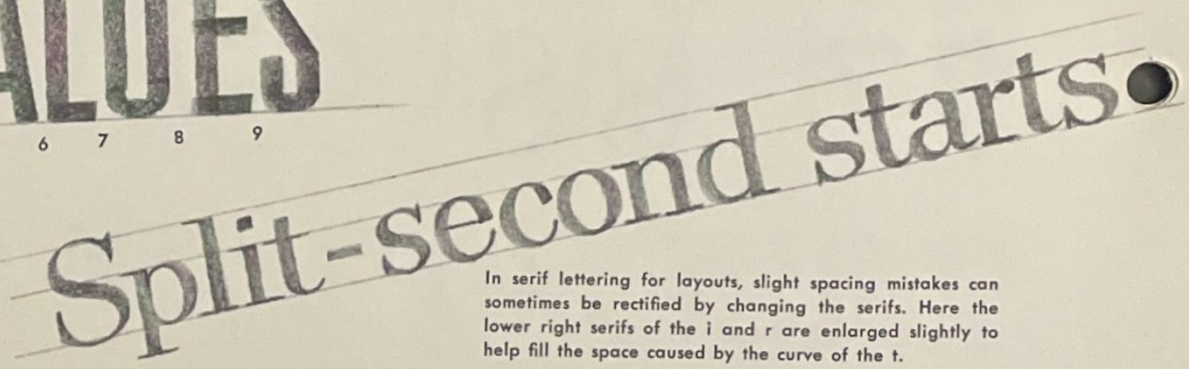
To do good lettering, it is not enough to know how to draw each letter correctly. You must also know how much space to put between letters, between words, and between lines.

In a well-lettered line, each pair of letters look as though they had the same space between them as every other pair. There will be no "holes" between some letters caused by too much space. Nor will there be dark areas because of too little space. The line should have a uniform pattern throughout.

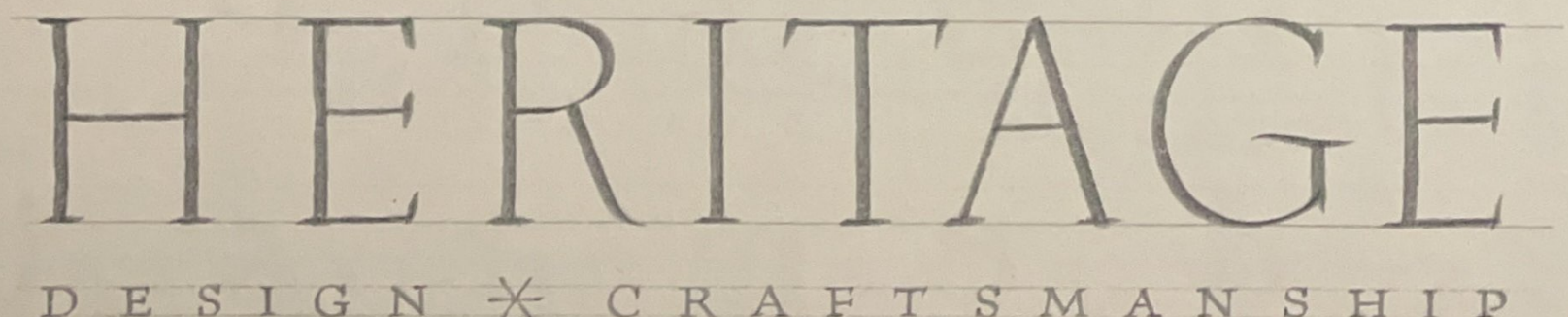
A ruler cannot be used to measure the space between letters because letters are not uniform in shape. Our best guide to good spacing is our eye, for, after all, lettering is an art, not a science. On this and the following pages we show you some principles that will help you to space letters correctly so the over-all effect is pleasing and the words are easy to read.



This line looks correct because of the space adjustments between the letters. Spaces 1, 2, 3, and 8 are equal because they separate letters with parallel sides. At 4 and 6 the diagonal almost touches the adjoining letter to offset the wedge of space. The V overhangs the A at 5. The bar of the L is shortened because there is so much space above it. There is considerable space in the E and S, so they are put close together.



In serif lettering for layouts, slight spacing mistakes can sometimes be rectified by changing the serifs. Here the lower right serifs of the i and r are enlarged slightly to help fill the space caused by the curve of the t.



These words are letterspaced: For reasons of design, words may be letterspaced — the letters may be drawn further apart than normal. The amount of letter spacing can vary, but use it sparingly because letters with too much spacing are generally not as easy to read as those with normal spacing. The same principles apply when a word is letterspaced as when normally spaced.

watch your negative patterns

The cartoon figures *(right)* are easily recognized as a fat man and a thin one not only by their shape but by the shape of the space around them — called negative space. (This space is shown in black around the two silhouettes.) The negative space around a letter also helps us distinguish it from other letters. Negative space is important in determining how close to put any two letters.

moves

Notice how the v has been placed so its diagonals reach out to fill the negative spaces caused by the curving away of the o and e. Similar adjustments must be made when the space between any two letters creates a hole.

ALTO-WAVE ALARMS

Here, to create good spacing, some letters overhang others, some almost touch. The crossbar of the L in "ALTO" is a normal length and comes under the crossbar of the T, while the L in "ALARMS" is shortened to solve the problem caused by L before A.

Common spacing problems

In certain combinations of letters spacing problems may arise. On this page we show you the commonest of these problems and how you can solve them. Sometimes you will have to alter the shapes of your letters slightly — but at no time should the change seem to cripple the letter or even be obvious. You must use great restraint in making any changes in the shapes of letters to improve spacing, lest you have good spacing but poor lettering.

DOG pod

Round next to round: These must be closer at their nearest points than most other combinations because the space increases at top and bottom as they curve away from each other.

DAC vow

Round next to slanting: A combination that must be very close at their nearest points because they curve and slope away from each other.

WAV wvy

Slanting next to slanting: When they are parallel, as at left, the space is about the same as for two verticals — but when they are not, as at right, they must nearly or actually touch.

MAN ivi

Upright next to slanting: There's a lot of space at the side of the diagonal, so, to offset it, the letters must be as close as possible — their serifs may even join.

HIM lip

Upright next to upright: Put more space between vertical letters than any other combination because there are no white areas cutting in to make the space look wider.

ONC hop

Round next to upright: They must be very close in the middle to offset the space at the top and bottom of the curve.

RA LT

A difficult pair: The tail of the R must be shortened and so must the adjoining serif.

Opposing bars: The L must be moved in so that its large serif is overhung by the crossbar of the T.

KS ry

Space inside: Both letters have ample space inside them so they don't need much "air" in between. However, they do need some.

Bottom space: Shorten the curve on the r and move it very close to the y to offset the negative space.

FT LA

Adjoining horizontals: Slightly shorten the top bars of the F and T and place them close together.

Top space: Bring them as close together as possible by slightly shortening the serif of the A and the crossbar on the L.

Get good color

Letters should parade across the line in an optically uniform way. When they are properly spaced and drawn, the lettering is said to have "good color." There should be no stragglers to create loose, irregular spaces — this makes the color too light. Nor should there be any bunching up of letters — this makes the color too dark.

✓ SPACE WORDS FOR LEGIBILITY

Good word spacing

✗ SPACE WORDS FOR LEGIBILITY

Not enough space

✗ SPACE WORDS FOR LEGIBILITY

Too much space

Word spacing and line spacing

The reader can tell where one word ends and another begins because there is a space between them. If there is not enough space, the words run together and look like so much gobbledygook. On the other hand, if there is too much space between the words, they look unrelated and are difficult to read. At the top of the page you see three examples showing the right amount of word spacing, too little, and too much.

The readability of lettering is influenced by the space between the lines as well as between letters and words. Here, again, there are no standard rules – your eye and artistic judgment must be your guide. The most common mistake is to jam long lines of lettering or type too close together. Except where you purposely place letters, words, or lines close together for a special effect, you should have enough "air" or space between them – to make it easy for the reader to see what he is reading.

SEPARATE LINES
FOR LEGIBILITY

SEPARATE LINES
FOR LEGIBILITY

Because there is adequate space between them, the two upper lines are easier to read than the two immediately above.

Separate
for legibility

← This space equals this space.

This is a good proportion for line spacing.

COLOR IS IMPORTANT

A line of lettering should have good color – an even, consistent tone or pattern. To check the color of your lettering, squint at it through half-closed eyes. In this line the color is poor for three reasons: the letters are poorly spaced, they are not the same value, and some are more condensed than others.

COLOR IS IMPORTANT

The color of this line is good because the letters are well spaced, condensed consistently, and of the same value. Don't worry about slight variations in value. These are natural in pencil lettering – and, fortunately, they are also desirable because they give added interest and character to the line.

Above all -

THE

First Thanksgiving

The decorative flourishes in no way reduce the legibility of these attractive and well-spaced letters.

RAGS IN PAPER

In this case a few of the normal principles of spacing were knowingly disregarded to create animated decorative effects.

STOPS COUGH TOO

To achieve this eye-catching design, normal spacing principles were violated — but in such a way that the words remain legible. Letters touch and overlap but their forms are never destroyed because careful attention has been paid to the negative spaces. This kind of overlapping works better with a few words than with a long piece of copy, and with fairly large letters rather than with small ones.

Vitality

Well-designed lettering has character and vitality. It may range from light and active, like this free-style script, to bold and strong, as in "Stops Coughs Too" at the right.

C H A L K T A L K S

Narrow letters lend themselves to letter spacing because they contrast well with the wide spaces between.

Elegance

Even in a very free style of script the spacing must help create a uniform color.

Use lettering rules creatively

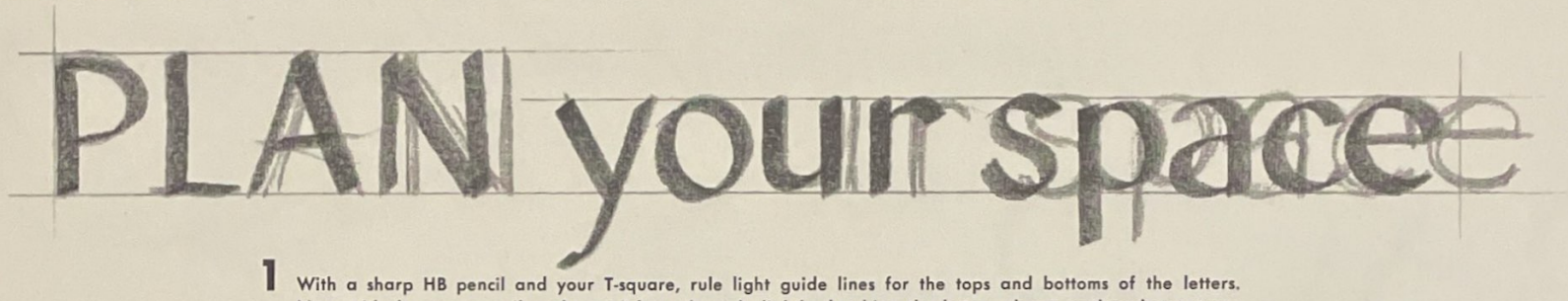
The principles of spacing we teach you here are guides — not strait jackets limiting your creative freedom. They are the rules through which you will learn what liberties you can take to produce good, easily read lettering to fill any need. Later in your studies we will show you how to use lettering and type in layouts in new and exciting ways, and at that time you'll have greater success if you are familiar with the fundamentals of basic lettering taught in this lesson. The examples on this page show you a few of the creative liberties you can take with these fundamentals.

How to do layout lettering

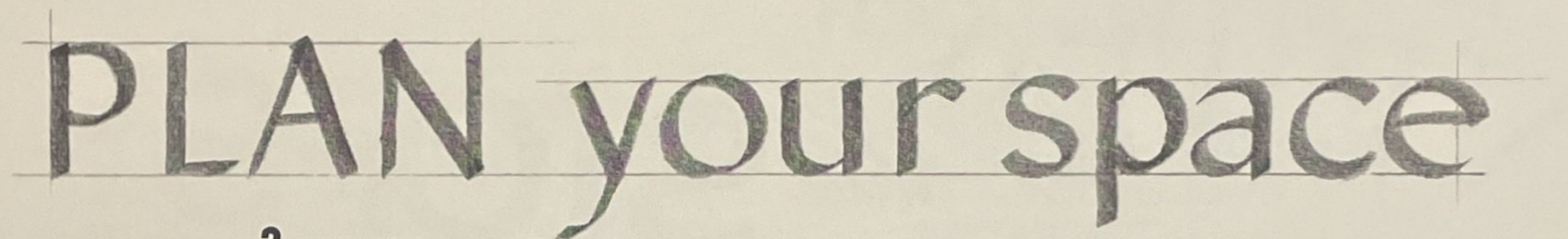
On these two pages, step by step we show you how to do layout lettering. You won't always make the three preliminary tracings you see here — sometimes you may do only one and at others maybe four or five. It doesn't matter how many you make — the important thing is to get a good tracing. The tracing has much to do with the artistic excellence of your finished layout.

We show the T-square being used for the verticals and horizontals. This is an excellent way to get good crisp, straight lines, especially on a very finished job, but it is not a must. Many lettering men make all the strokes freehand, though they may rely on T-square lines on the tracing underneath to help them get their finished lines straight. You should stroke your horizontal lines and serifs along the T-square edge. It gives a neat, craftsman-like appearance to a line of roman lettering.

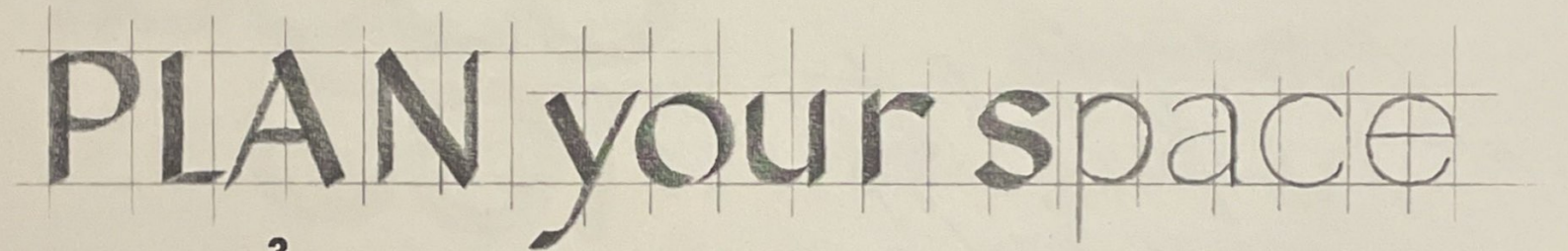
Always keep your pencil well pointed so all your lines look equally crisp. The chisel point will draw every stroke needed to produce a completed letter. Don't hesitate, however, to make adjustments with a pointed pencil.



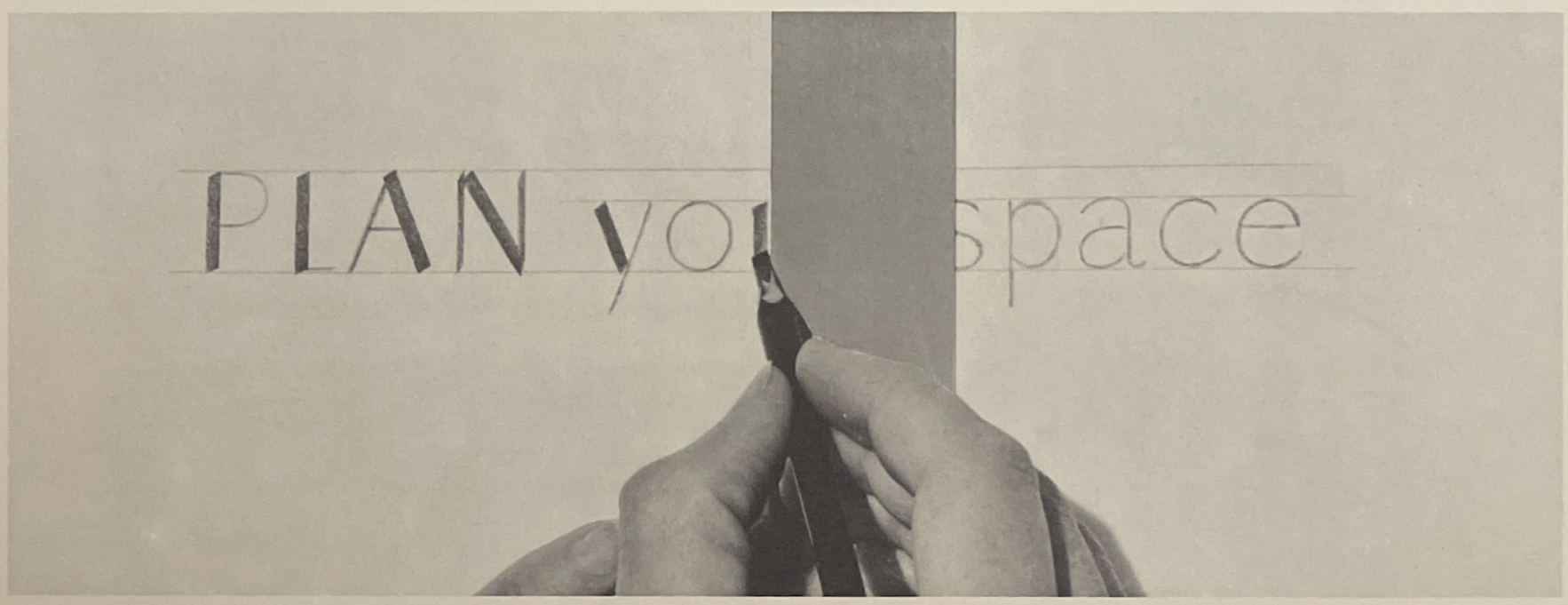
1 With a sharp HB pencil and your T-square, rule light guide lines for the tops and bottoms of the letters. Now, with the same pencil, make a trial run-through, lightly sketching the letters almost as though you were writing them. Don't refine the letters — all you are doing at this stage is trying to fit the letters to the line. With a soft chisel point, reletter over your light lines and try to come out even, as we show above.



2 Tear your first rough sketch from the pad and insert it under a clean sheet. Now make another run-through, improving the proportions of the letters and the spacing. Keep the proportions of your letters and the spacing uniform. Don't tighten up or loosen up on the spacing or width of the letters if it looks as though you are going to come out wrong — you can make adjustments in the next tracing.



3 Make another run-through. This time it should be fairly easy to draw and space the letters to fill the line exactly. First draw the basic letters, using an HB. Then, with a chisel point of the correct width, carefully stroke in the letters, using the basic letters as a guide. (Before making the freehand vertical strokes, you may find it helpful to draw light vertical lines at frequent intervals with a triangle and use them as guides.) You now have a well-spaced line of fairly accurately drawn letters.



4 Place the tracing under the clean top sheet of the layout pad. Draw very light guide lines. Using the T-square — or working freehand if you prefer — draw all vertical lines with a chisel-point pencil. To make the strokes dark enough it may be necessary to run the pencil back and forth several times.

5 Now draw all the horizontal strokes, using the T-square as a straightedge. The diagonal strokes are put in either freehand or by using the triangle alone as a straightedge.

6 Stroke in the curves freehand. Keep the point of the pencil at a thirty-degree angle to the horizontal line. Strive for accuracy of proportions and any slight imperfections in the curves will not be very noticeable.

7 Complete the letters by stroking in the serifs. To give the line of lettering a crisp, even finish, use the T-square as a guide for all the horizontal serifs. Add the vertical and diagonal ones freehand.

Practice different size letters. Use harder pencils as the sizes get smaller

and always keep your chisel point sharp for crisp letters.

Also practice letters with narrow strokes and **wide strokes**

Different weights: Letters vary in weight as well as in size. Letters made with thin strokes are called lightface, those made with wide strokes are called boldface, and those in between are medium face or medium weight. The weight of letters is varied by varying the width of your chisel point.

Lightface

Medium weight

Boldface

Different proportions: You can create different styles of letters by changing their proportions. Letters that are narrow for their height are called condensed and those that are wide for their height are called extended. Extended letters are good when the space is wide and there is little to be said — and especially when a few words are to be given prominent display. Condensed letters are useful when a lot has to be said in a limited space.

Extended face

Condensed face

WEIGHTS MAY CHANGE

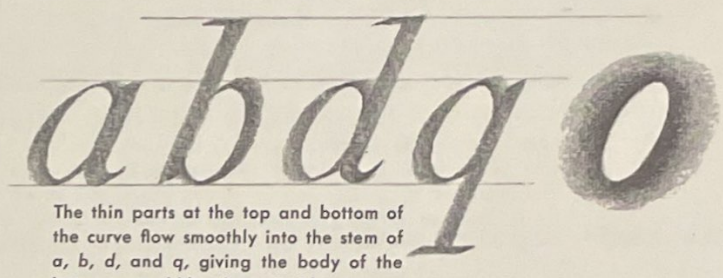
PROPORTIONS MAY CHANGE

Italic letters

Italic letters slant to the right, and this slant is their most characteristic feature. They are widely used for emphasis, for a change of pace, or many other purposes. Almost every type face has an italic version, often in various weights. The term italic is used in contrast to roman, which describes the upright version of both roman and gothic faces.

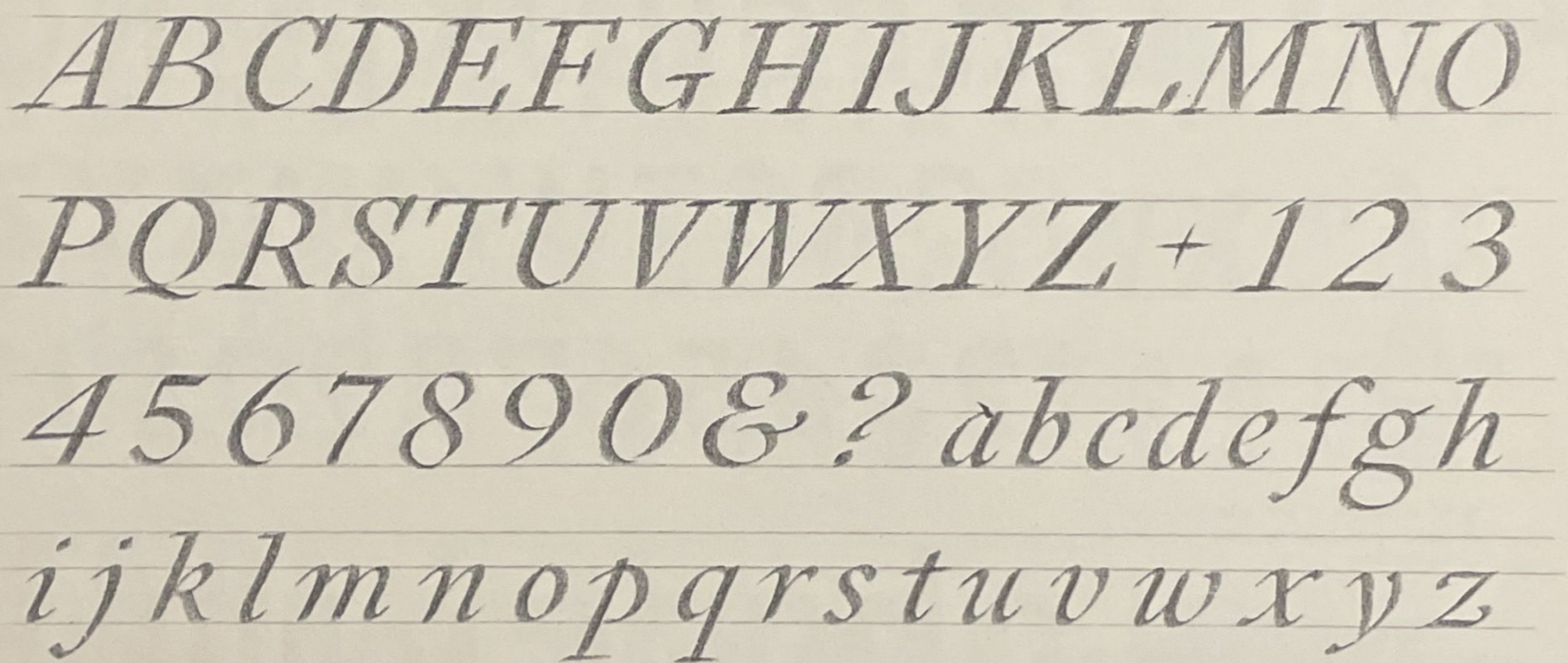
The strokes for italic caps are made in the same sequence and manner as the roman caps we have shown you. It is in the lowercase letters that we find the greatest difference. Instead of serifs there are curved hairlines – the chief exceptions being the top of the ascenders on *b, d, h, k,* and *l,* which have horizontal serifs. Other noticeable differences are in the form of *a, e, f, j, k, v, w, y,* and *z.* Notice how smoothly the thin lines and the hairline serifs flow into the main stems. In the rounded letters, such as *a* and *b,* the thin lines turn and join the stems to create graceful oval-like shapes.

Italics are letters slanted from 10 to 30 degrees. (More than that makes them hard to read.) Notice that while these typical caps appear to slant evenly, not all of the up-and-down strokes are slanted to the same degree.

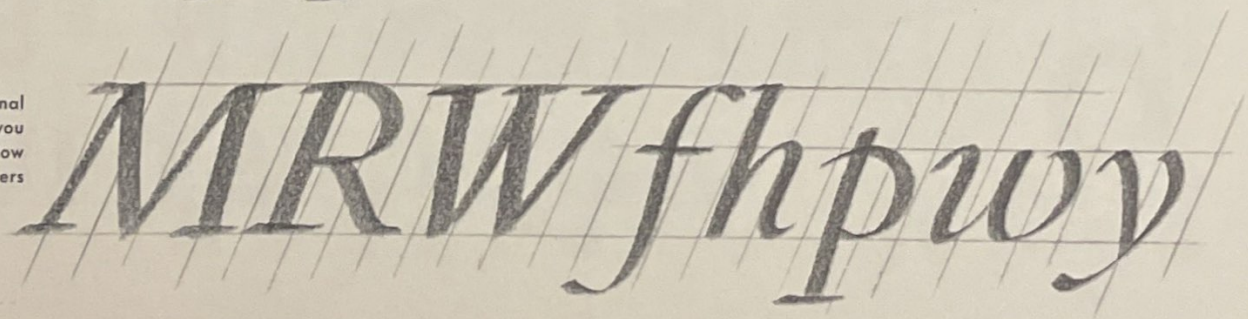


The thin parts at the top and bottom of the curve flow smoothly into the stem of *a, b, d,* and *q,* giving the body of the letter an oval-like shape inside.

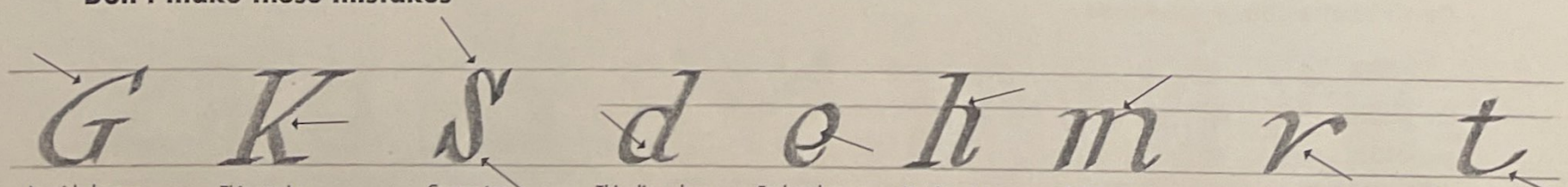
Caslon italic alphabet



Guide lines: Draw light parallel diagonal lines as a guide for your eye before you letter in italics. Not all letters will follow these guide lines exactly – but all letters should appear to have a uniform slant.



Don't make these mistakes



Lopsided curve spoils inside oval.

Thin stroke joins too low.

Curves too condensed – give pothook effect.

Thin line does not curve up enough.

Enclosed area too large.

Hairline joins too high.

Stem not in center.

Hairline joins too low.

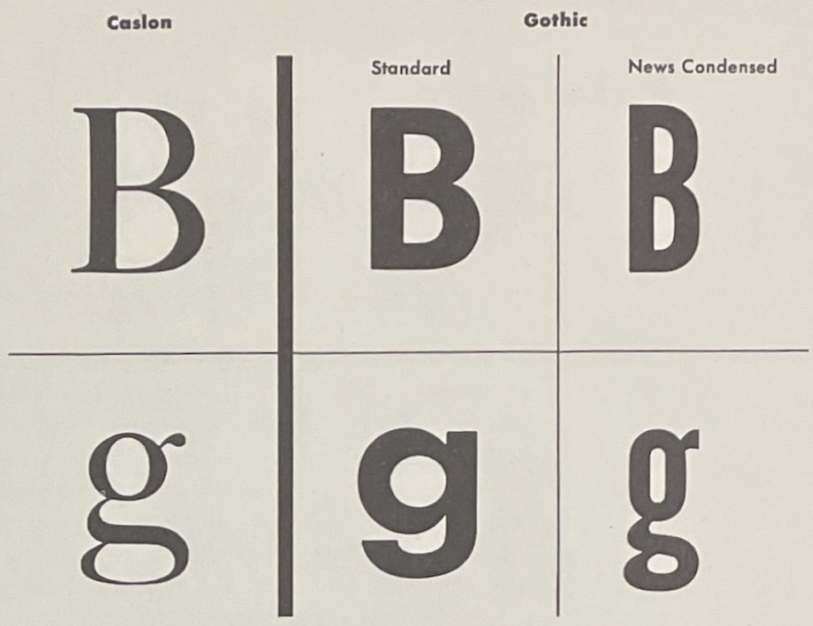
Tail too large.

Gothic letters

So far you have been studying how to draw roman alphabets – which are made of thick and thin strokes and may have serifs. Now we are going to teach you the alphabets made of strokes of equal or almost equal width and without serifs. These alphabets are called gothic. They are also referred to as block letters and sans-serif. To the right you see a Caslon B and g contrasted with a B and g in two gothic faces – Standard and News Gothic Condensed. Like the roman, the gothic has the same structure as our basic alphabet. In fact, the basic alphabet on page 6 is gothic – a very lightface gothic. Gothics can be boldface, medium, or light. They can be condensed, normal, or extended (expanded), and they can also be italic.

Gothic faces can be used in many ways. They are excellent where bold impact is needed because they can be made extremely heavy or condensed without becoming hard to read, as is the case with roman letters. On the other hand, the lightface gothics can be used to express great delicacy and restraint.

When you draw gothic letters, always turn the chisel-point pencil in the direction of the stroke so it will have the same width throughout. This is quite different from the procedure for thick and thin lettering.



Standard – a gothic alphabet

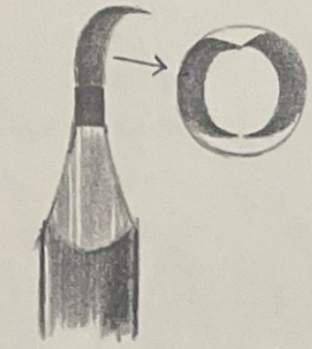
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNO

PQRSTUVWXYZ

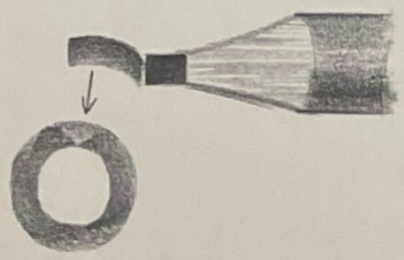
1234567890&!?

abcdefghijklm

nopqrstuvwxyz

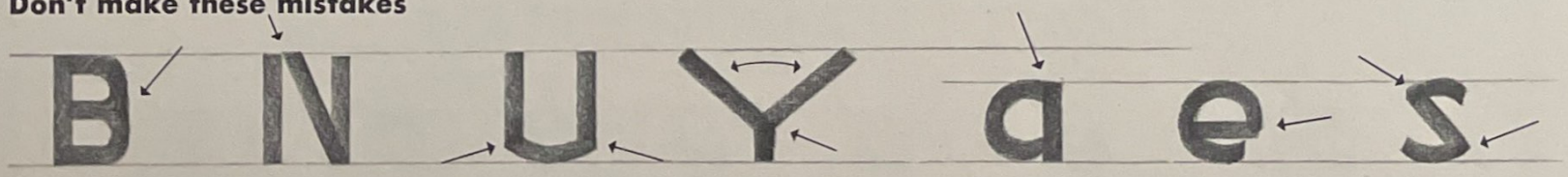


1 To make the O and other round letters, begin by drawing the sides.



2 Then draw the top and bottom, turning the pencil in the direction of your stroke.

Don't make these mistakes



Lobes don't curve inward.

Diagonal doesn't connect properly.

Corners should be curves.

Top too open, main stem too short.

Curve joins stem incorrectly.

Crossbar too low.

Curves too sharp.

To draw gothic letters, follow the procedure on pages 18 and 19. Use the edge of the T-square as a guide for the verticals and horizontals; then draw the curved strokes freehand, keeping the pencil turned in the direction of the stroke. Even up the tops and bottoms of verticals by stroking them with the pencil drawn along the T-square. Gothic letters can also be done freehand. In this case, rule vertical guide lines on your final run-through, from which you will trace the lettering freehand. These guide lines, showing through the visualizing paper, help you keep the uprights uniformly vertical.

News Gothic Condensed

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P

Q R S T U V W X Y Z &

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 ! ?

a b c d e f g h i j k l m

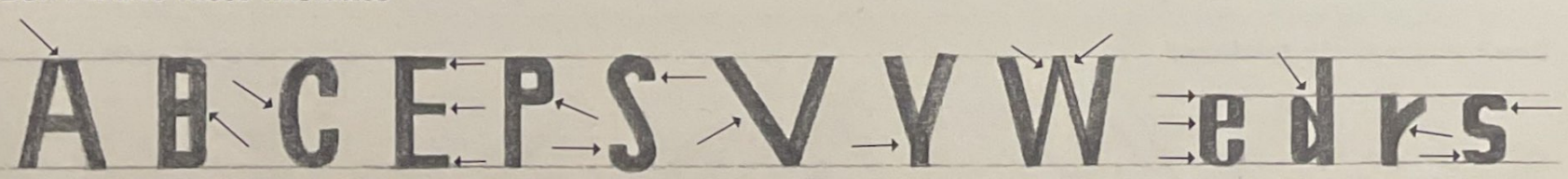
n o p q r s t u v w x y z

First draw the verticals with the aid of the triangle or T-square, then join them with freehand curves.

The horizontal strokes are slightly thinner than the verticals. If made the same size, the horizontals look too heavy and clumsy.

Generally, the curved stroke is thinner where it joins a straight one; otherwise there will be a dark spot where the two heavy strokes join.

Don't make these mistakes



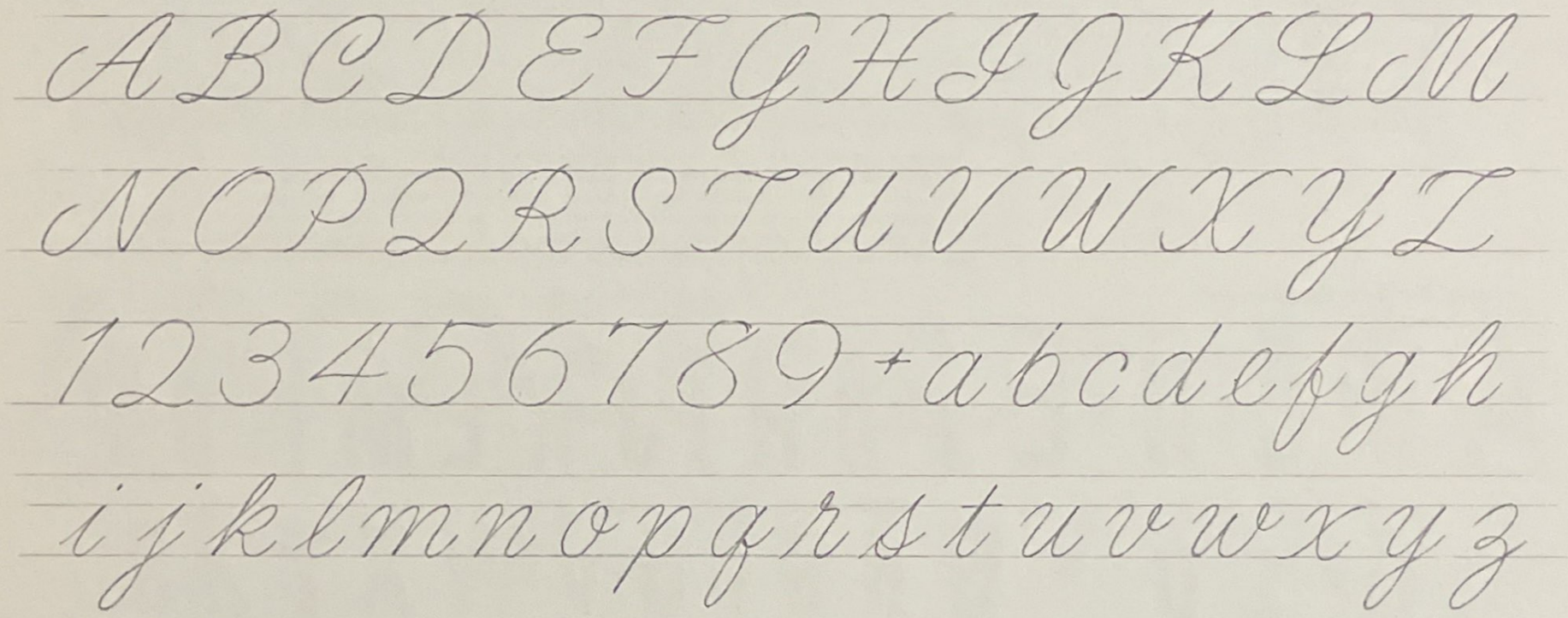
Too wide at top. No notch. Side should be straight. Horizontals too thin. Crossbar too high. Sides too short. Wrong slant. Main stem too short. Too thin in center. Horizontals too thin. Poor curve. Short stroke too low. Sides too short.

Script letters

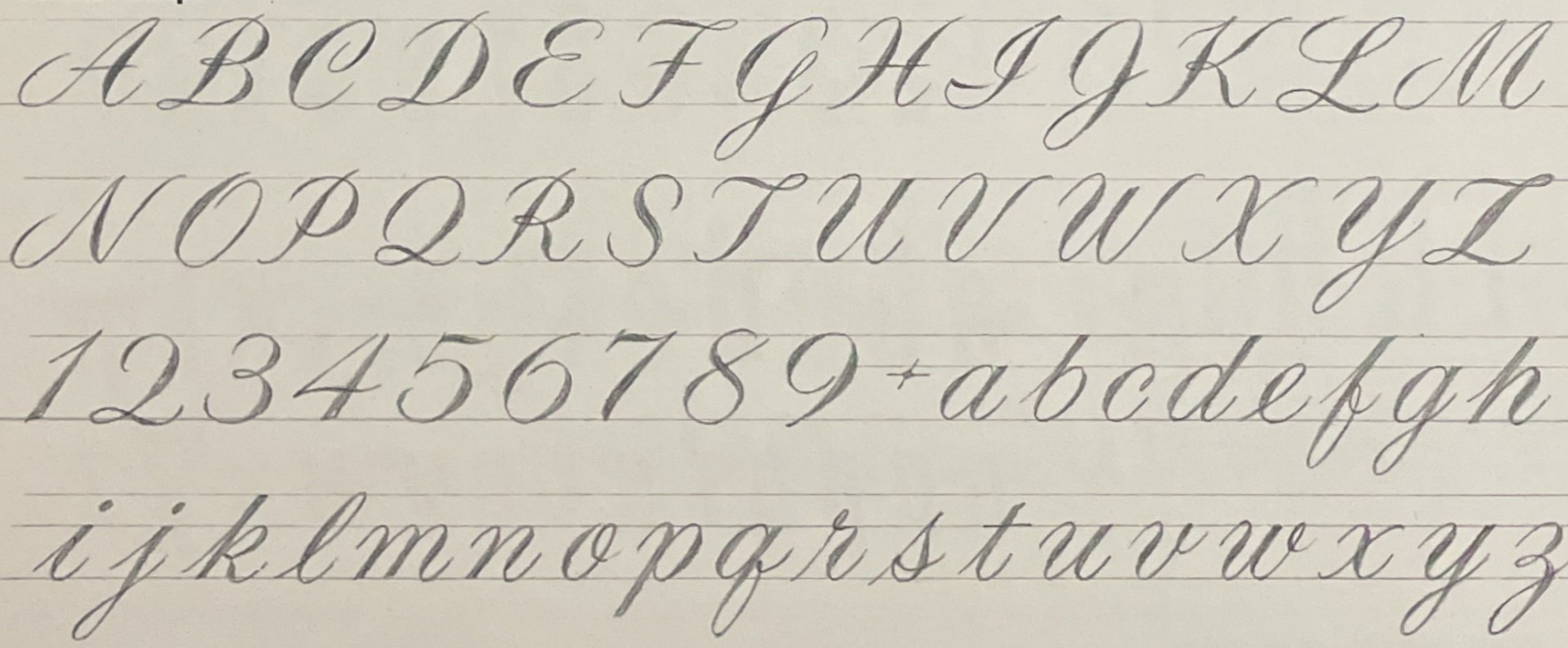
Script is based on handwriting. A good way to get the feel of its basic strokes is to write with a flexible pen that will make hairline strokes when you put light pressure on it and wide strokes when you apply heavy pressure.

Just as there are many styles of handwriting, so there are many styles of script. On these two pages we concentrate on the basic script letters and on Formal Script, a thick and thin version of these letters. Formal Script is easy to read and it gives an impression of elegance, dignity, and refinement. In layouts promoting or displaying products with these qualities, it's an extremely useful alphabet. When you have a good understanding of basic script and Formal Script you will be prepared to create many variations of script to suit the requirements of the different designs for which they are needed.

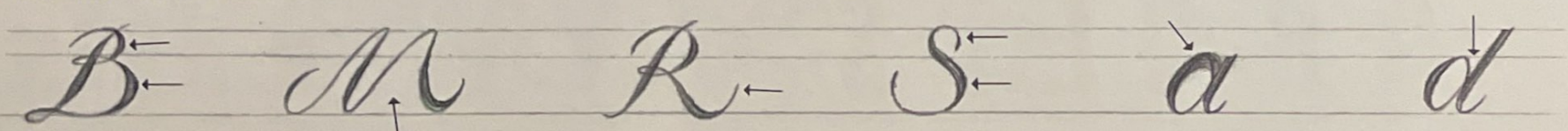
Basic script letters



Formal Script



Don't make these mistakes



Top curve too small, bottom too large.

Too much spread.

Tail too long.

Top loop too small, bottom too large.

Weight of curve too high.

Top hairline joins stem too low.

Principal strokes of the capitals and lower-case letters

Script letters are based on the use of a flexible pen, with varying pressure producing strokes of varying width. Keep this in mind as you draw script letters in pencil.

BNHXCTy

The black lines on these letters show the principal strokes used in making these and the other letters of the Formal Script alphabet.

abghinnks

OMS

Letters or parts of letters that are joined with curves like those indicated by the circles at the right should be uniformly smooth and the same size. Imagine all of them as curving around circles of uniform size. Don't draw the circles — just keep them in mind as you make the letters.

landing mankind

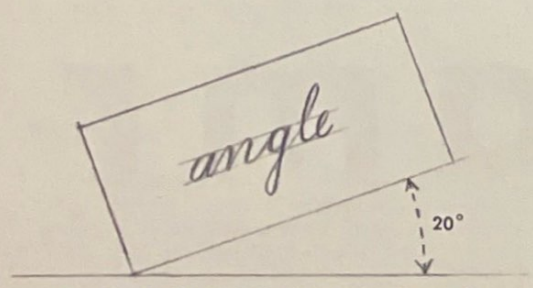
Hairlines which sweep up to join main stems must be uniform in direction. They should also join the main stems at exactly the same height.

For good spacing, the width of the curves made by the upsweep hairlines should be alike.

The color of Formal Script is established mainly by the heavy downstrokes, as demonstrated by the examples at the right. This same principle applies in all alphabets where there is decided contrast between the hairlines and the thick strokes.

Color and rhythm

Color and rhythm



You may find it easier to draw script if you tilt your paper about twenty degrees.

Script 1 *built-up*

2 *varied pressure*

3 *chisel-point*

Three ways to render script in pencil: (1) The most accurate way is to build up the thicks with a pointed pencil. Be sure to have a fine point when drawing the hairlines. (2) A quick way to indicate small script is by the heavy and light pressure method. As you draw the letters with your pointed pencil, apply heavy pressure to make the thick strokes and very light pressure for the hairlines. (3) Another way, useful in making large letters quickly, is to render the thick strokes with a chisel point and put in the hairlines with the corner of the chisel point or a pointed pencil.

Don't make these mistakes

e — Loop too far forward and too large.

k — Top curve too flat. Lower stroke curves in too much.

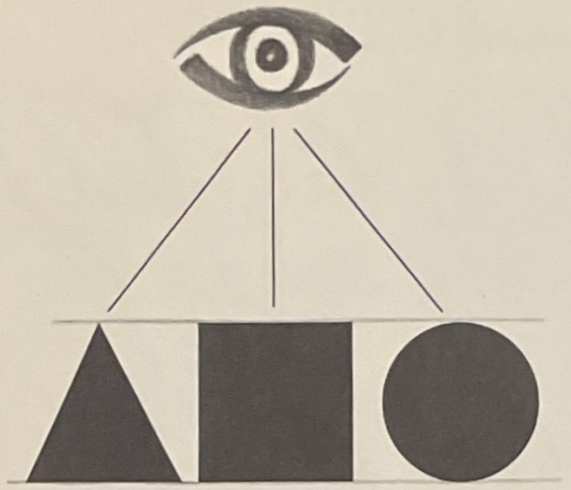
i — Curve too sharp.

dil — Thin lines join stem too soon.

t — Top slopes too much.

s — Curve too flat.

m — Curves too flat.

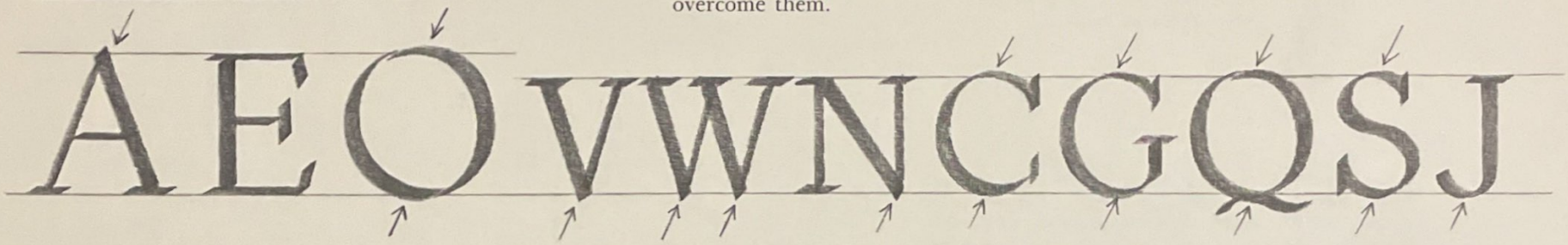


Optical illusions and distortions

Our eye is bothered by certain distorting effects that sometimes occur in designs. Some of these effects are of great concern to the letterer – especially the illusion that makes certain forms of the same height look quite different in height when placed next to each other. For example, triangles and circles never look as tall as a square of exactly the same height. Similarly, triangular and circular letters will look shorter than most other letters unless you do something to correct the illusion.

When you draw or design letters, you must make adjustments that will offset these disturbing effects so all your letters appear correct and consistent.

On this page we show you some common optical illusions and distortions you will encounter in your lettering and what you should do to overcome them.



The triangle, rectangle, and circle above are exactly the same height. However, due to an optical illusion the triangle and circle look shorter than the rectangle. To make all three appear the same size, we must extend the point of the triangle above the top guide line and the circle beyond both top and bottom guide lines. Now think of the triangle as A, the rectangle as E, and the circle as O. To have these three letters appear the same height we must make the same corrections by enlarging the A and O slightly. The arrows show where these adjustments are made on these and other capital letters that need them. The same considerations apply to lower-case letters. Similar adjustments must be made in every face if you want the letters to appear uniform in size.

WRONG RIGHT

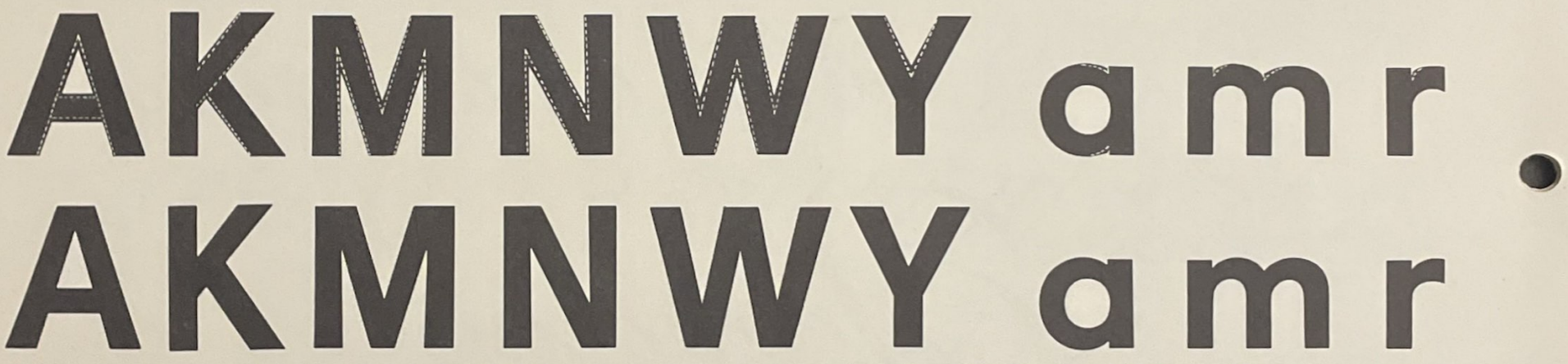
The horizontal strokes *(left)* look wider than the vertical one even though they are the same width. Adjust by making the horizontals slightly narrower *(right)*.

WRONG RIGHT

The roman O thins immediately above and below its thickest parts. If it is to appear to have the same weight as the other roman capitals, these parts must be made slightly wider than the verticals, as in the I.

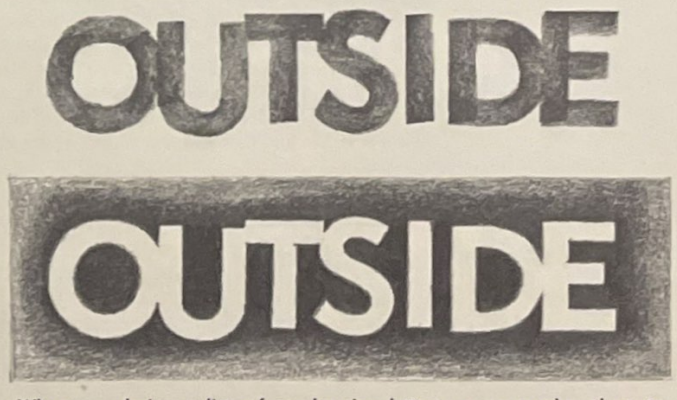
WRONG RIGHT

The crossbar on an H looks low when put exactly in the center. Draw it slightly above center, as on the right.



In heavy gothic alphabets there is an optical illusion that some strokes become thicker as they approach and join other strokes. This is clearly seen in the letters in the first of the two rows above, and also occurs in such letters as the V, X, d, n, and g. Adjustments must be made as indicated by the dotted white lines. The second row shows how the letters appear after these adjustments have been made. These changes, though slight, are important.

The characters above remind us that we identify letters as much by the space enclosed by them and surrounding them as by the actual forms of the letters. The M, for example, partly encloses three triangles, and the G and R, like all other letters, have their own characteristic negative space. Whenever you take liberties in drawing letters, be careful not to change their form and identifying negative space so much that the letters become distorted and hard to recognize.



When you design a line of overlapping letters, never overlap them to such an extent that either their form or the negative space is greatly distorted. The lettering on the upper line is successfully overlapped because there is enough of each letter for your eye to fill in the missing parts. Likewise, the identifying negative spaces have not been destroyed, as you see in the diagram of the negative space.

How to identify and draw different type faces

Different type faces are identified by their serifs, their thick and thin strokes, their curves, and general silhouette. If you know the identifying features of a few key characters in any face you will be able to recognize the face and you will also know what characteristics to look for and stress when drawing the other letters.

Below are cap and lower-case examples of five letters which most clearly display the identifying characteristics of an alphabet. We show them in ten of the most widely used roman and gothic faces. Here are the features you should note particularly: A – the point; G – the height of the vertical; M – the thickness of the thin strokes and whether the outside strokes depart from the perpendicular; R – the tail; T – the serifs and the relative weight of crossbar to stem; a – the shape of the enclosed area; g – the curl at the top, the shape of the enclosed area, and the tail; m – the serifs on the left stem and how the two curves join; r – the curving stroke and how it joins the stem; t – the bottom of the stem and how the crossbar joins the stem.

Study and compare the examples on this page. Observe where the letters of the different faces are alike and where they differ. This will help you to know what to look for when identifying or drawing these faces. In any other alphabets, these five capital and lower-case letters will serve the same valuable purpose.

Roman

Caslon: Serifs are medium in length and weight, have rounded points, and curve into the stems. Thick strokes have straight parallel sides. Thin strokes are quite thin. Round letters are full and almost circular.

A G M R T a g m r t

Bodoni: Horizontal serifs are long, straight, thin lines. There is a marked contrast between thick and thin strokes of letters. Thins are almost hairlines. Letters are very crisp and precise. Round letters are slightly condensed.

A G M R T a g m r t

Garamond: Serifs curve very slightly on flat side and are moderately long. They are rounded at the ends and blend into the stems, which are slightly tapered on some letters. Thin strokes are moderately heavy. Most strokes blend into each other, creating soft or rounded joints.

A G M R T a g m r t

Century: Horizontal serifs are long, fairly thick, and square at the ends. Serifs have a round blending into stems. There is an average contrast between thicks and thins. Curved letters are slightly condensed.

A G M R T a g m r t

Bookman: Serifs are long, thick, and square at the ends, and blend into stems. There is not much contrast between the strokes because the thin strokes are wide and thick ones narrow. It is a wide face and curved letters are full.

A G M R T a g m r t

Gothic

Futura Demibold: All strokes appear to be the same width, but curves taper slightly when joining a stem. (This is especially noticeable in the lower-case letters.) The round letters look very much like circles.

A G M R T a g m r t

Franklin Gothic: Marked thinning of some strokes, especially where curves join stems. Round forms are slightly condensed, except on B, P, and R, where they are expanded.

A G M R T a g m r t

Alternate Gothic: Condensed face with uniform-looking strokes except where curves join stems. Round forms have flat sides.

A G M R T a g m r t

Venus: Slightly expanded face with apparently uniform thickness to all strokes except curved letters. Curved forms tend to be flat at top and bottom.

A G M R T a g m r t

Memphis: A cross between gothic and roman. All strokes appear equally wide, like gothic, but letters have serifs, like roman. Serifs are square and as thick as main strokes. Round letters are almost circles. Round forms of B, D, P, and R are flat on top and bottom.

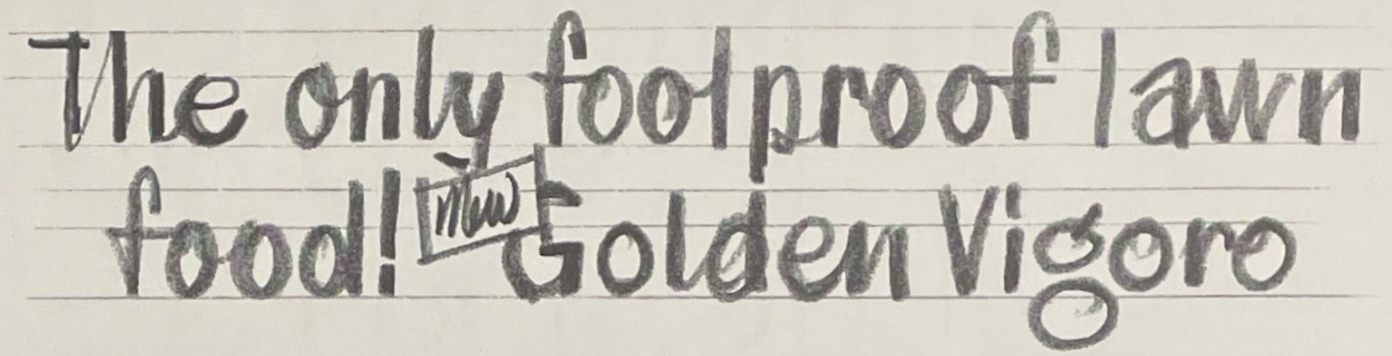
A G M R T a g m r t

From rough to finished layout lettering

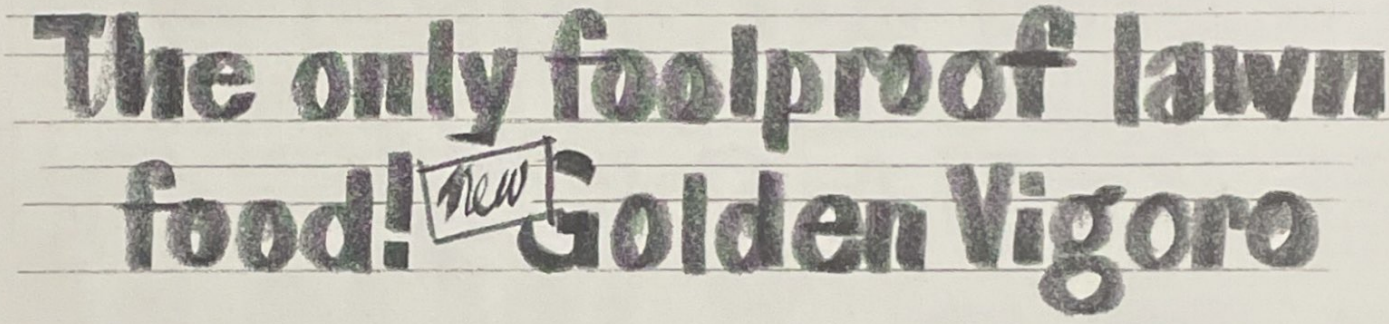
How rough or how finished your layout lettering should be depends upon its use. It can range anywhere from very rough to extremely refined, as you see from the four examples we give you here. There are no set rules saying which kind of lettering to use when, but the suggestions on this page can serve as a guide. Before you do a layout assignment, always decide how far you are going to carry it. It would be foolish to waste precious time carefully rendering comprehensive letters like those at the bottom of this page when all that is required is a rough. Practice doing all types of layout lettering, from extremely rough to comprehensive, so that you can do any kind you are asked to.

On the facing page we introduce you to some additional tools you will find useful in lettering many kinds of layouts, and we also show you the effects you can create with them.

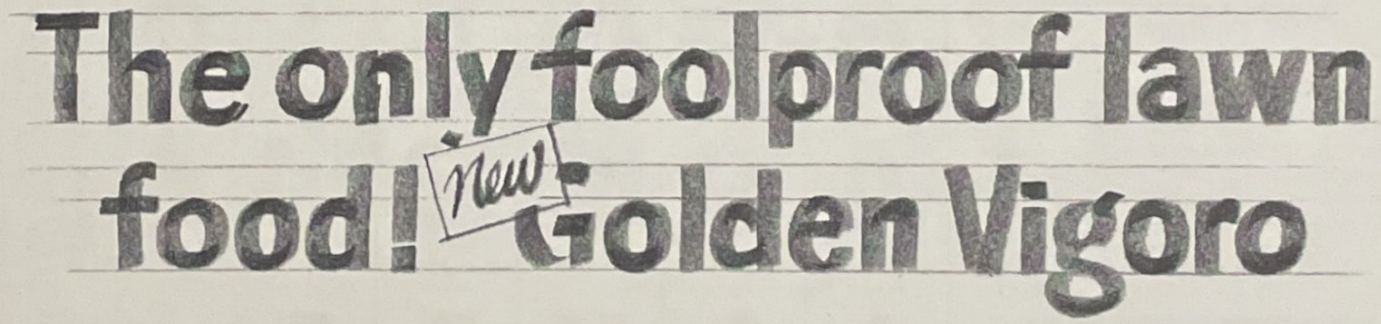
Rough-rough: Where speed and economy are important, a rough-rough is sufficient to indicate the size and character of the lettering and suggest the over-all effect. It is generally done with a dull-pointed layout pencil directly on the layout, without a trial run-through. Rough-roughs are used extensively in store advertising, for a series of layouts following an established style, and by advertising agencies and art departments to get a quick visual impression of a proposed ad.



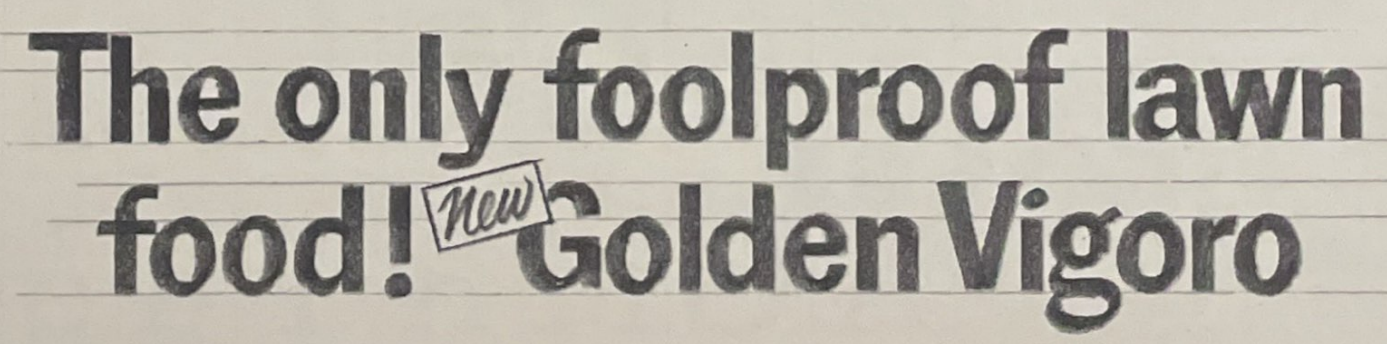
Rough: A rough is generally traced over a rough-rough with a chisel-point pencil, and gives a better idea of the weight, character, and spacing of the lettering.



Semirough: This is the degree of finish generally needed to determine whether the various elements in the layout are properly related to each other in size, position, value, and character. Many advertisers never ask to see layout lettering any more finished than this.



Comp: The comp, or comprehensive, as the word implies, gives a clear and comprehensive idea of how the finished ad will look. This is the usual degree of finish for layouts submitted by most advertising agencies to their clients.



URETHANE

Chisel point and sharp point: A chisel point made the smooth wide strokes and a sharp B pencil the crisp hairline strokes and serifs on these roman letters. The thins may also be drawn with the chisel point by moving it sideways.

interlining

pressure point

Varied pressure: A 2B pencil produced these examples of script, with heavy pressure applied for the heavy strokes and light pressure for the light ones.

Spring sale

Built-up: These letters were built up freehand with a fine-pointed B pencil.

South America

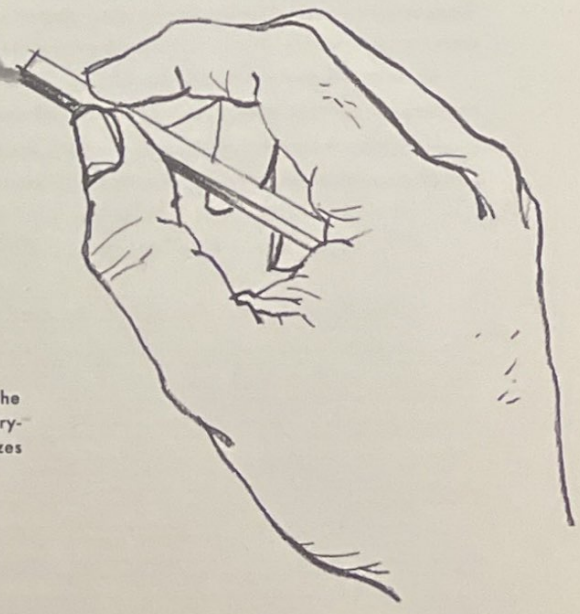
Grease pencil: For an effect different from lead pencil, plus good dark accents, try a grease pencil.

the "jeune fille" look

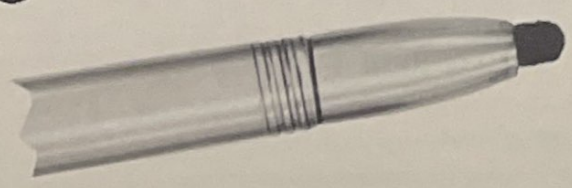
Fountain pen: The point moves across the paper better than a drawing pen, giving you greater freedom for experimenting with novel pen lines.

chalk

Pastel: Nupastel sticks are useful for large letters. You can produce various effects with different values of pastel and it is good for lettering in color.



felt nib letters



Felt pen: Depending on the amount of ink on the felt, you can produce effects varying from light dry-brush gray to juicy black. Felts of different sizes and shapes create many fresh styles of lettering.

Indicating copy

Only important headlines and subheads are lettered in a layout – the very small type or copy is usually indicated by one of the methods shown here. Copy indication should be carried to the same degree of finish as the lettering. Always indicate your copy in such a way that it suggests the size, weight, and character of the type to be used in the finished job.

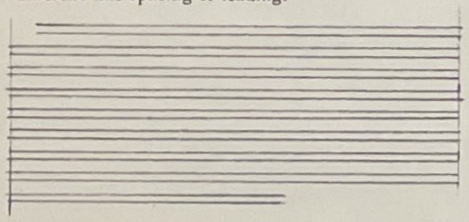
Copy indication should have the same over-all value as the type. It should never be so pronounced in texture or value that it detracts from other important layout elements. When there is much copy, have several pencils sharpened so you can switch to a fresh one as a point becomes dull, thus keeping the copy uniform in appearance.

Below we have set a piece of copy in three different faces and sizes: a small light face, a medium size and weight face and a large heavy face. Notice in each case how different the type looks and how much more space it occupies as the size of the type increases. Under each block of copy we show how to indicate it on a layout with double lines, the most widely used method. See how light lines, with only a small amount of space between them, were used to indicate the light face and how the lines were made heavier and the space wider as the size and weight of the type increased. Look at each block of type and its line indications through half-closed eyes and see how similar in value and character the two are.

Copy

The lines used to indicate copy on layouts should express the value and the size of the type. This is done by giving the lines the correct weight and by ruling them the correct distance apart. Use dark lines for boldface types and lighter lines for lightface types. To indicate type with more space between lines, draw your lines further apart. Here you see the same copy set in three different type faces and sizes with different line spacing or leading.

Pencil indication



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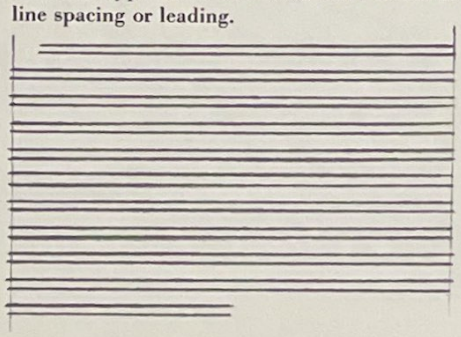
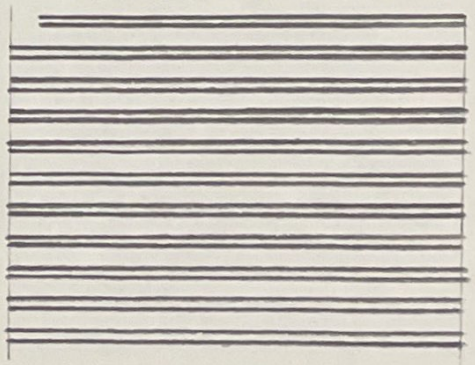
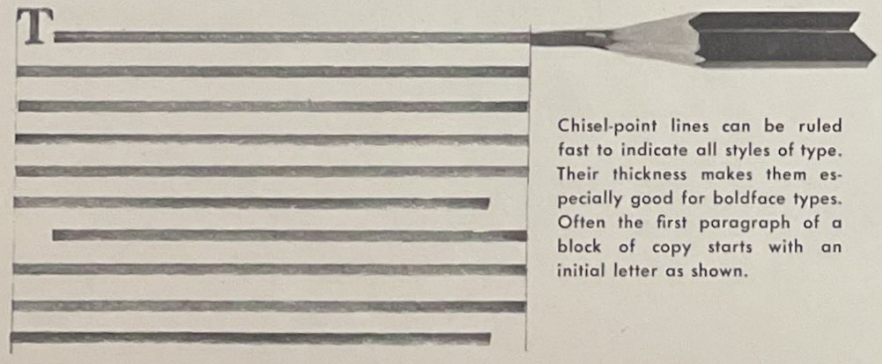


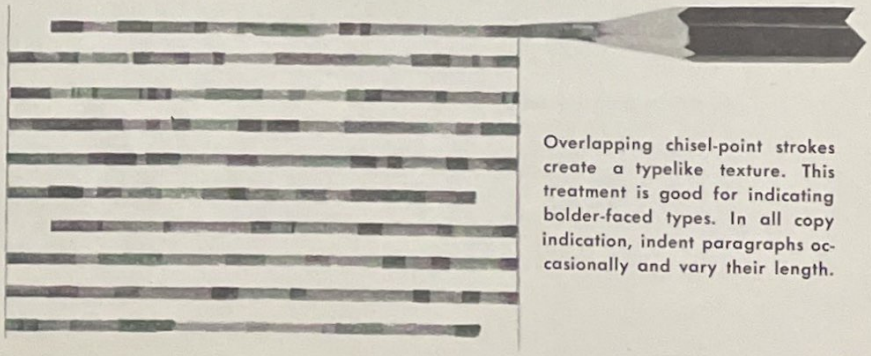
The lines used to indicate copy on layouts should express the value and the size of the type. This is done by giving the lines the correct weight and by ruling them the correct distance apart. Use dark lines for boldface types and lighter lines for lightface types. To indicate type with more space between lines, draw your lines further apart. Here you see the same copy set in three different type faces and sizes with different line spacing or leading.



Other ways to indicate copy

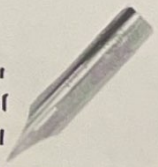


Chisel-point lines can be ruled fast to indicate all styles of type. Their thickness makes them especially good for boldface types. Often the first paragraph of a block of copy starts with an initial letter as shown.



Overlapping chisel-point strokes create a typelike texture. This treatment is good for indicating bolder-faced types. In all copy indication, indent paragraphs occasionally and vary their length.

Sometimes on finished layouts, the type is indicated with India ink, opaque, or wash, with a ruling pen. This was done in opaque gray.



Another way to suggest type on very finished layouts is by a series of vertical pen or pencil lines, broken by a few horizontals and curves. Occasionally put in ascenders and descenders, and space your "words." This technique is called "Greeking."

Among the tools and materials you will use for finished lettering are a brush, pens, black India ink, and opaque white for retouching. A set of mechanical drawing instruments *(top left)* often comes in handy.

Finished Lettering

So far in this lesson we have taught you how to do lettering on layouts from roughs to comprehensives. Now in this section we are going to explain and demonstrate, step by step, how to carry this work to its final stage – the finished lettering for reproduction on the printed page.

Artists specialize in finished lettering because it can be a profitable profession and is a challenging artistic discipline. The letterer must be sensitive to the subtle variations in the lines, curves, and weights of the various parts of each letter, and he must work painstakingly to draw them correctly. At the same time, he has the satisfaction of seeing exciting, well-designed words take shape under his hand as he puts down on paper the delicate lines and forms of the letters he sees in his mind's eye. Skill in finished lettering is an important requirement for such special fields of art as posters, packaging, and book-jacket designing. For the layout man or art director this skill is a valuable asset.

Some of the procedures and tools for making finished lettering are similar to those for making layout lettering. Here we explain the additional materials you will find useful.

The most popular lettering pens are: Gillott No. 290, which has a fine point and is flexible, making it very useful for various kinds of script; Gillott No. 170, which has a medium point and is more rigid; and Gillott No. 303, which is a slightly thicker, even more rigid pen. Fine flexible pens should be used only on papers with a hard surface, or else these pens are apt to catch on the paper and make rough edges. Pens of comparable size and characteristics made by other pen companies may also be used. Through practice and experience you will learn which points are best for your particular needs. A penholder about as thick as a pencil is recommended.

A good ruling pen is a must. Desirable but not absolutely essential is a complete set of mechanical drawing instruments.

You will need a No. 2 or 3 sable brush of best quality for retouching with white paint. For brush lettering of script, have several larger sizes.

Any good standard-grade black India ink is satisfactory. Extra-dense ink is used with the brush by some lettering men because it produces good black letters with just a single coat of ink.

For retouching, use a good opaque white water color such as Permo White or Talens Hi-White. You will also use lampblack or ivory black occasionally.

Most finished lettering is done on kid-finish Strathmore Bristol board. It comes in various weights or plies, the most popular being three ply. Some letterers use a plate finish rather than kid. Many other kinds of paper can be used. Experiment to find those most suitable for your needs.

Cleanliness is important for both your drawing instrument and your finished product. Work that is smudged and stained is not welcome anywhere, so use a slip sheet under your hand. Clean your pens frequently as you work so they will always make the clean, sharp lines which are the basis of good lettering.

The layout

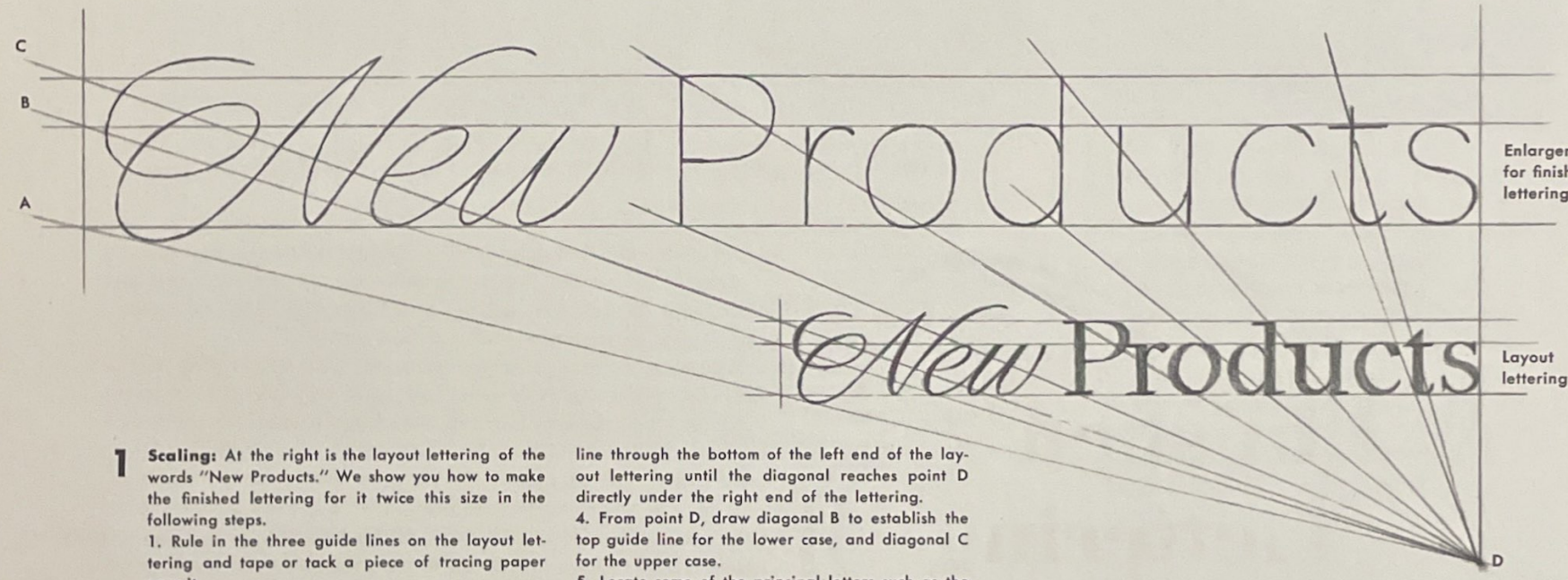
How to do finished lettering

When you are asked to do finished lettering, the art director generally gives you a comprehensive layout he has made which shows you the character, size, and weight of the lettering. In some cases he may be able to give you only a "rough-rough" layout and describe the character he wants the finished lettering to have. When this happens it is best for you to make a comprehensive pencil rendering to establish the character and weight of the words in clear detail. Work from this just as you would from the art director's comprehensive.

To the left is a greatly reduced reproduction of a typical art director's comprehensive layout. On this and the following pages we show you how to make the finished lettering for the headline "New Products." When there are several good ways to do some of the steps, we demonstrate these, too.

We begin by showing you the ways most frequently used to "scale up" or enlarge the layout lettering to a convenient working size for doing the finished lettering.

Finished lettering is often drawn one-half larger than reproduction size, and many lettering men make their work twice the size. Our demonstration below shows you how to enlarge the layout lettering to twice the reproduction size. Where the reproduction size is extremely small it may be necessary to work at three times the size, but avoid this if possible. When you make your finished lettering so much larger, it is difficult to judge correctly how it will look when reproduced.



1 **Scaling:** At the right is the layout lettering of the words "New Products." We show you how to make the finished lettering for it twice this size in the following steps.

1. Rule in the three guide lines on the layout lettering and tape or tack a piece of tracing paper over it.
2. A little above the layout lettering, draw the base line for the finished lettering on the tracing paper. Make this line twice as long as the layout lettering.
3. Draw diagonal A from the left end of the base line through the bottom of the left end of the layout lettering until the diagonal reaches point D directly under the right end of the lettering.
4. From point D, draw diagonal B to establish the top guide line for the lower case, and diagonal C for the upper case.
5. Locate some of the principal letters such as the P, d, and t with diagonal lines. This will give you a good start for your first run-through.

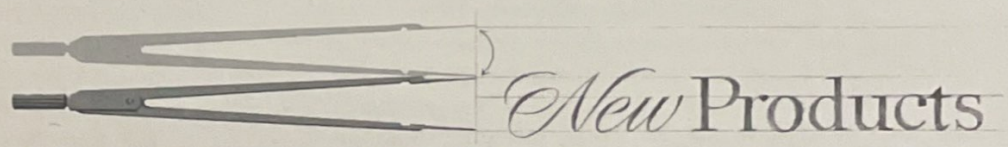
When you have enlarged your lettering by this method or any of those explained below, proceed as explained on the facing page.

Other ways to enlarge

Photostat: Many lettering men use a photostat service to have the layout lettering enlarged to a convenient working size. Then they make a tracing from the photostat and go on to do the finished lettering.

Camera Lucida, Pantograph, Projector: Any of these instruments can be used to enlarge the lettering, as explained in a later lesson. The camera lucida is the most popular.

Proportional squares: Lightly pencil in evenly spaced vertical and horizontal lines on the layout lettering, dividing it into a series of squares. On a tissue make a similar arrangement of squares, but twice as large. Draw the letters in the tissue squares in positions corresponding to those on the layout lettering.



Dividers: Set a pair of dividers to the height of the layout lettering. Double this measurement by turning the dividers over to the position of the light gray ones in the diagram. All other measurements, such as the width of the word or the individual letters, can be doubled in the same way.

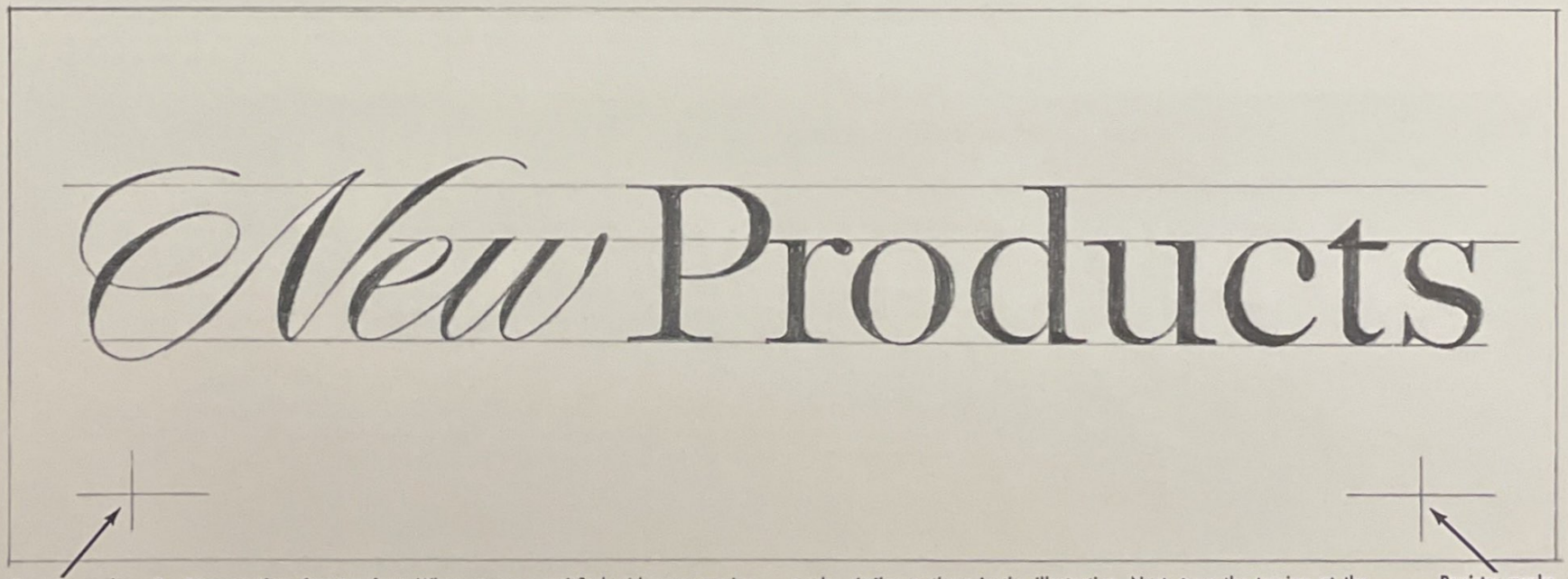
Proportional dividers: This is another hand instrument for enlarging. Set the dividers so the tips of the long end measure twice the distance the tips of the short end do — or whatever other proportion you are enlarging. If you fit the small ends to the layout lettering, the long ends automatically give the proper measurement for the finished lettering.

2 **Blocking in:** When your lettering has been scaled up to twice the size of the layout, slip it under the top sheet of your visualizing pad. Then stroke in the letters to the correct weight with a chisel point or build them up with a B or 2B pencil. In the illustration, all of the letters have been given proper weight except part of the basic u and the c, t and s, which show through from the tissue beneath.

At this stage, don't spend too much time accurately drawing each letter in great detail. Concentrate on getting the proportion of the letters correct and the spacing and color the way you want them. Adjustments in spacing can most easily be made by sliding the under tracing back and forth until the placement of the letter you are drawing is correct. Frequently look at your entire piece of lettering to see that the spacing and color are uniform throughout. If this tracing does not look right you should make another, perhaps several, until you are satisfied that you have a good foundation on which to build the finished letters.

To get a fresh look at the spacing, color, and proportions of your lettering, it is a good idea to look at it in reverse. Also study it upside down.

3 **Final tracing:** When you have the spacing and color right, carefully refine each letter on the final tracing. A series of light lines — diagonals for italics, verticals for vertical letters — will help you keep your letters properly slanted or upright. Lines through the centers of curved letters like the o are especially helpful. Build up your letters, including the verticals, freehand, so you can see better what subtle adjustments you must make in the width of letters and in the spacing. The triangle and T-square interfere with spontaneity — which comes from relying on the eye rather than a straightedge. Keep a good point on your pencil so you can draw precise lines. Be sure every problem of design is solved on this tracing.



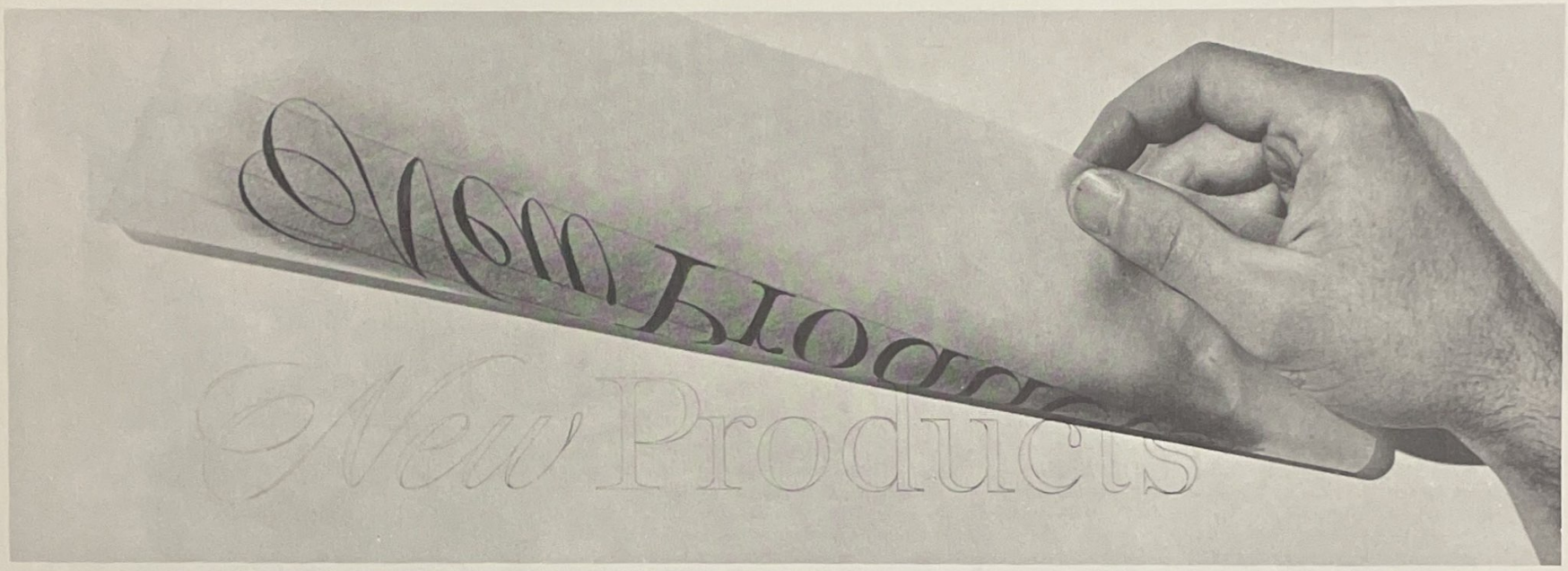
Register marks

Register marks

4 **Preparation for tracing:** When you are satisfied with your tracing, turn it over and blacken the back with a pencil — H to 3H are good because when you trace they give you clear, firm, light lines.

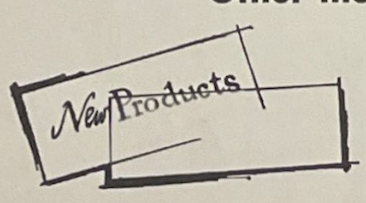
Thumbtack or tape the drawing paper for your finished lettering to the board. At the lower corners of the tracing, make two sets of register marks, similar to those in the illustration. Next, tape the tracing at the top to the drawing paper and, with the T-square, accurately trace these marks. Now you can untape your tracing and shift it to make slight adjustments in the positions of your letters. Make sure that the register marks on both sheets are aligned before retaping your tracing.

5 **Tracing down:** Using a 6H or harder pencil with a fine point, trace the horizontal guide lines lightly. Next, with the aid of the T-square and triangle, trace all the outlines of the vertical and horizontal lines of the letters (see photo below) with firm pressure on your pencil. Then, with the tracing paper still taped to it, remove the drawing paper from the board. You can now turn the paper (with the tracing attached) to whatever angle is best for freehand tracing of the outlines of the curved letters. Sharpen your pencil constantly while you work.



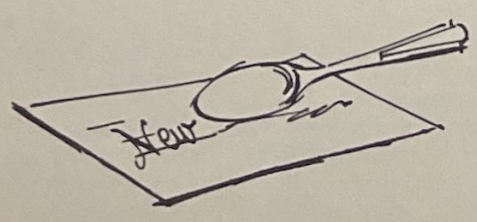
6 **Checking your tracing:** As you trace, frequently lift your tracing paper to see if the lines you're transferring to the drawing paper are sharp and that you haven't missed any. Make firm lines but do not press so hard that you create furrows in the paper. The more precisely and accurately you do this job the easier and more successful your inking will be. If you need to make changes with a pencil, do them lightly.

Other methods of tracing

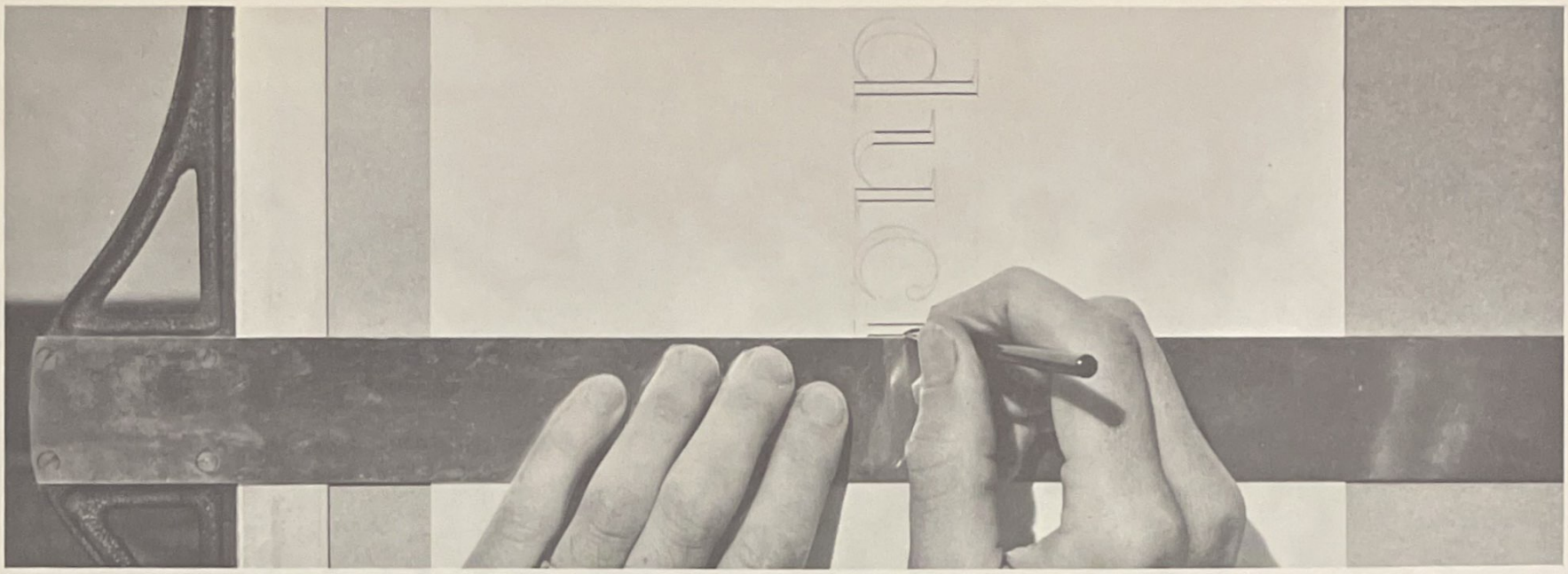


Direct finish on thin paper: For rush jobs not requiring an extremely high degree of finish, you can skip the "tracing down" step. Over your final tracing, tape a piece of thin drawing paper and draw on it with ink. The drawing paper must be transparent enough for your tracing to show through. If you can't see the tracing clearly you will have to use the pen more carefully. The paper must also be tough enough for the pen not to pick up fibers. Good grades of visualizing bond and tracing vellum can be used. Experiment to find the paper you like best.

Light table: A light table has a top of frosted glass with a light under it. Place your final tracing on the light table, then place the Bristol board for your finished lettering on top of the tracing. The light shining through enables you to draw directly on the Bristol, thus eliminating the tracing-down stage.



Transfer: Place a piece of layout paper over your final tracing and rub it firmly with the edge of a spoon. This will transfer the graphite of your drawing to the back of the layout paper. An extra piece of paper held over the part you are rubbing helps prevent tearing of the layout paper. Now tape the layout paper, with the graphite side down, over your drawing paper and again rub with the spoon — this will transfer the graphite of your lettering to the drawing paper. Instead of the spoon, you can also rub with the chisel point of the carpenter's pencil — the graphite it leaves will show where you have rubbed. Your lettering is now ready for inking. Practice these methods before trying them on an important lettering job.



7 **Inking the verticals and horizontals:** With a ruling pen, T-square, and triangle, draw all the straight vertical and horizontal outlines. Fill in with the ruling pen, a regular pen, or a brush if the letters are large. Some artists do not use the ruling pen for the verticals and horizontals, preferring to build them up with a series of short freehand pen strokes (see diagram at right), so the straight lines will have the same character as the curves, which are explained in the next step.

8 **Inking the curved letters:** Ink the curved letters freehand with short strokes of the pen. Free your drawing paper from the board when inking curves and serifs, so you can turn the paper and make the strokes in the direction most convenient for you. Be sure the edges of the curves are smooth and sharp — they must be consistent with the edges of the verticals and horizontals made with a ruling pen. Touch the pen lightly to the paper so it won't scratch and cause ink blots. A slip sheet under your hand will prevent smudging. Keep your pen clean so the ink will flow freely. Wipe the pen frequently on a cloth or on the edge of a scrap of drawing paper.

9 **Finishing touches:** Wait until you have finished inking the entire job before correcting any mistakes. Correct the general forms of the letters and any unevenness of color. In most cases it is best to make corrections with the pen. Where the ink has gone beyond the proper limits of a letter, cut it back with white opaque, using a No. 2 or No. 3 brush. Small corrections of black over white opaque can be made with ink on a pen. For large corrections use lampblack with a brush — not India ink, which may chip off if used on large areas. With Artgum, gently erase all pencil marks and smudges. Then examine your lettering from every angle and make the final adjustments, using a very fine point to even up ragged edges. The job is now complete.

Mitchell Witch No. 2½
Hunt Speedball No. C-0
Speedball Steelbrush No. E ¼"
Mitchell Round-hand No. 0
Esterbrook Drawlet No. 14
Winsor & Newton No. 4 round
Winsor & Newton No. 4 cut square

abCdefg

Bat

ABCDabcef

ROUND

The Quick B

BALL POINT

ABCDEF

Rigger brush

ROUND BRUSH CUT SQUARE

SQUARE STUB POINT FOR CARTOONS

San Francisco eats well, has fun after dark

Mitchell Bladex ⅜"
Coit's Show Card Pen No. 6
Hunt Speedball No. B-1
Hunt Speedball No. B-3
Flat Rigger Brush ⅜"
Esterbrook Probate Pen No. 313
Fountain Pen — stub point

Here are a few of the countless lettering pens and brushes available and examples of some of the kinds of letters they make. There are many other pens, each with its own virtues, which you may want to try. Among the leading manufacturers of lettering pens are: C. Howard Hunt Pen Co. (Speedball), Esterbrook Pen Co., Bridgeport Pen Co. (Coit), Gillott Pen Co., William Mitchell's Pens, and Brandauer and Co., Ltd. Two good fountain lettering pens are the Pelican Graphos and the Osmiroid 65, each with a wide variety of points. Most manufacturers furnish booklets explaining how to use their pens.

Broad-pen and brush lettering

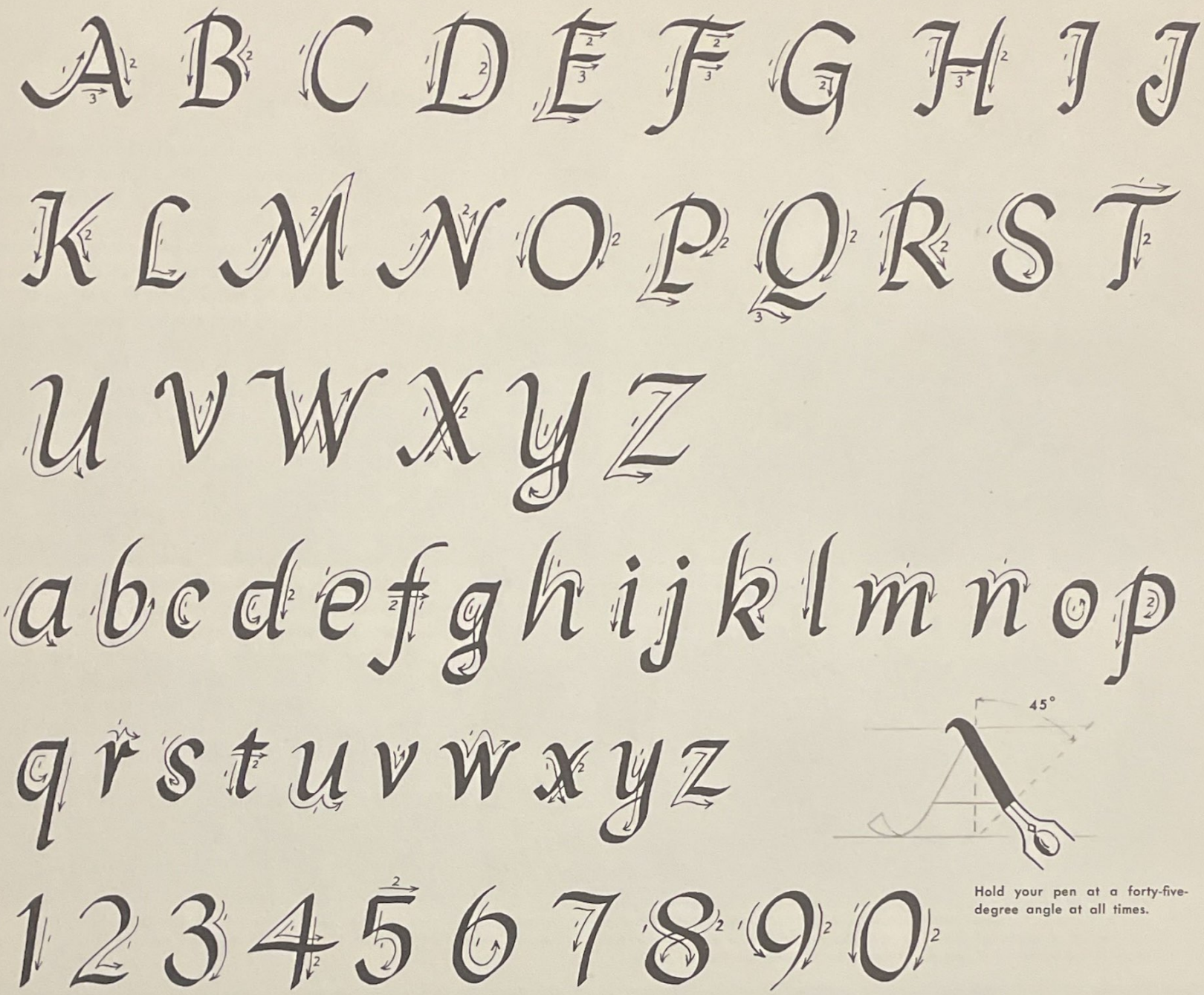
As you have seen, our roman letters were evolved with a flat tool. Up to the time when printing was invented, all of our books were lettered by hand. The tool used was a broad flat pen. Broad-pen lettering continues to be very useful even today, particularly on the many occasions that the artist is required to do posters, signs, certificates, charts, displays, and countless other jobs. These may be for local charities, clubs, or businesses — they may be gratis or for good fees — but essentially they are the sort of things that have to be done quickly and are not intended for reproduction, at least in any large quantity.

These jobs often make excellent contacts for the beginning artist and they can be a source of civic satisfaction for the established artist. To do them in the limited time usually available, it is most helpful to be able to handle some of the broad pens skillfully. One of the purposes of these two pages is to give you guidance on how to do this quick but most effective and useful kind of lettering. Naturally it will take some time and practice to achieve real speed.

Broad-pen or brush lettering is not only useful — it can also be a highly creative art. Broad-pen lettering such as on the facing page is known as calligraphy, which literally means "beautiful writing." Calligraphy has a long tradition, and a knowledge of this art is valuable to the artist interested in either layout lettering or finished lettering because it furnishes new ideas for attractive letter forms.

The broad pen, you see, is a highly creative tool. With the various pens available you can devise all kinds of novel and exciting lettering effects. Furthermore, each of the different pens can produce many alphabets, both standard and of your own design. (Actually the term "broad pen" is a loose one — it includes brushes which can be used in very much the same manner as the pens, to achieve a wide variety of interesting effects.)

A useful script alphabet



Hold your pen at a forty-five-degree angle at all times.

To get started, let's see how the very useful alphabet on this page was drawn. First three light lines were ruled as guides for caps and lower case. Then a series of light diagonal guides were drawn with the triangle and T-square. The No. 2 Hunt broad-point lettering pen was used. The pen was dipped in India ink, and one or two strokes were made on scrap paper to remove any excess before the pen was applied to the drawing paper. (For more careful work, you may want to fill your pen by putting a drop or so in the little round cup on top.) The pen was held constantly at about a forty-five-degree angle to make these letters, which are reproduced the same size they were drawn.

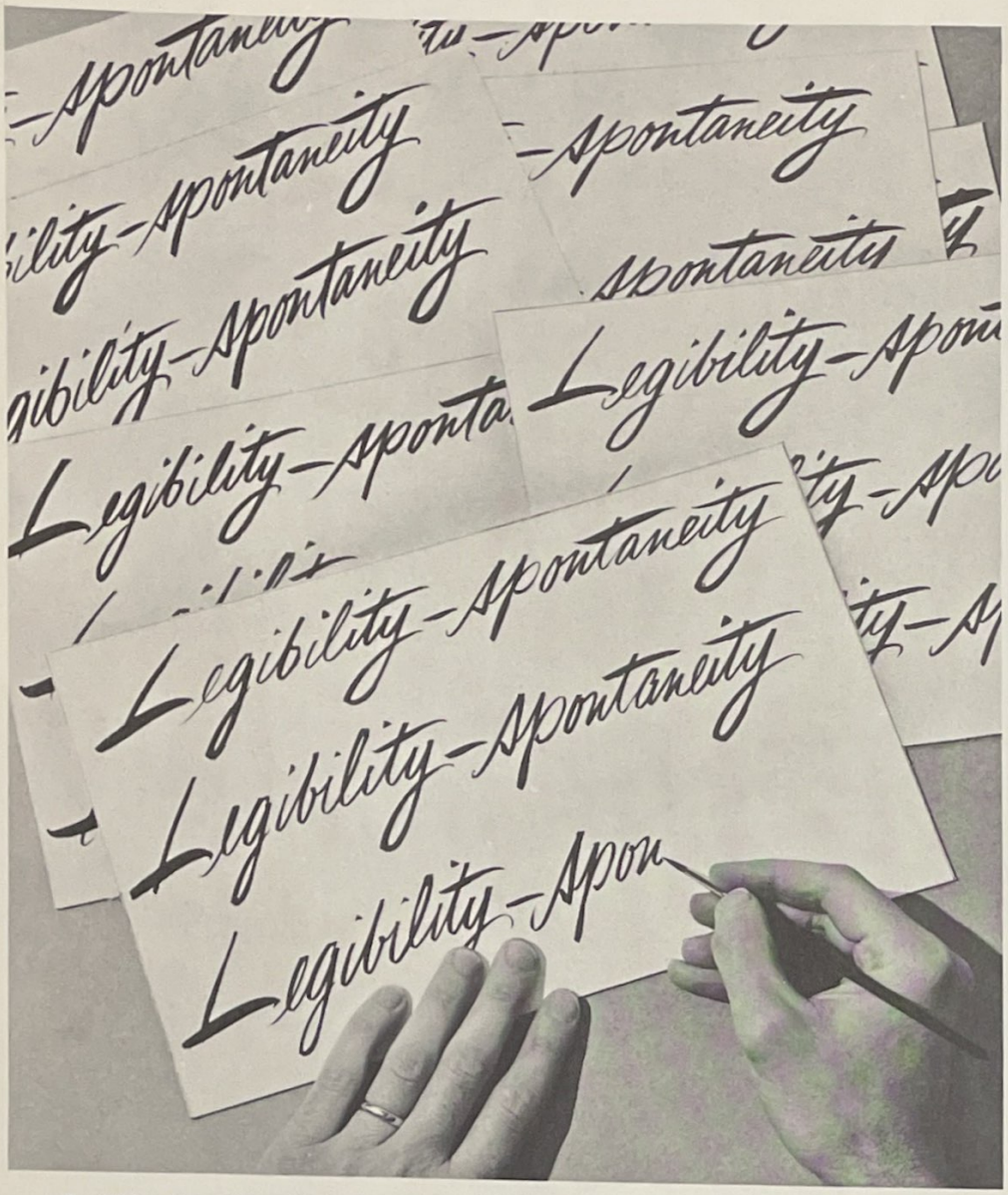
In this alphabet the lower-case letters are five times as high as the width of the pen nib and the capitals are eight times as high. By using a wider or narrower pen, you can give the letters a different character.

The strokes were made in the sequence and direction shown by the numbered arrows. You do not have to exert extra pressure to make dark letters, as you do with the chisel-point pencil. Just apply the pen lightly but firmly to the paper and the ink flows out to create a jet-black line. This makes it possible to draw many of the letters in a series of flowing strokes without lifting the pen from the paper. A good pen will generally work well no matter in which direction it is pushed or pulled.

A version of this same alphabet could be made with almost any of the tools shown on page 36. You don't have to limit yourself to India ink — many of the tools, especially the larger ones, will take opaque paints or show-card colors when slightly thinned with water. Some surfaces are better than others for each tool, but most of the tools work well on many different surfaces.

Fortunately, most of the pens and inks you use in broad-pen lettering are inexpensive, so you can explore the possibilities of a number of them at little cost.

Keep pens and brushes clean!



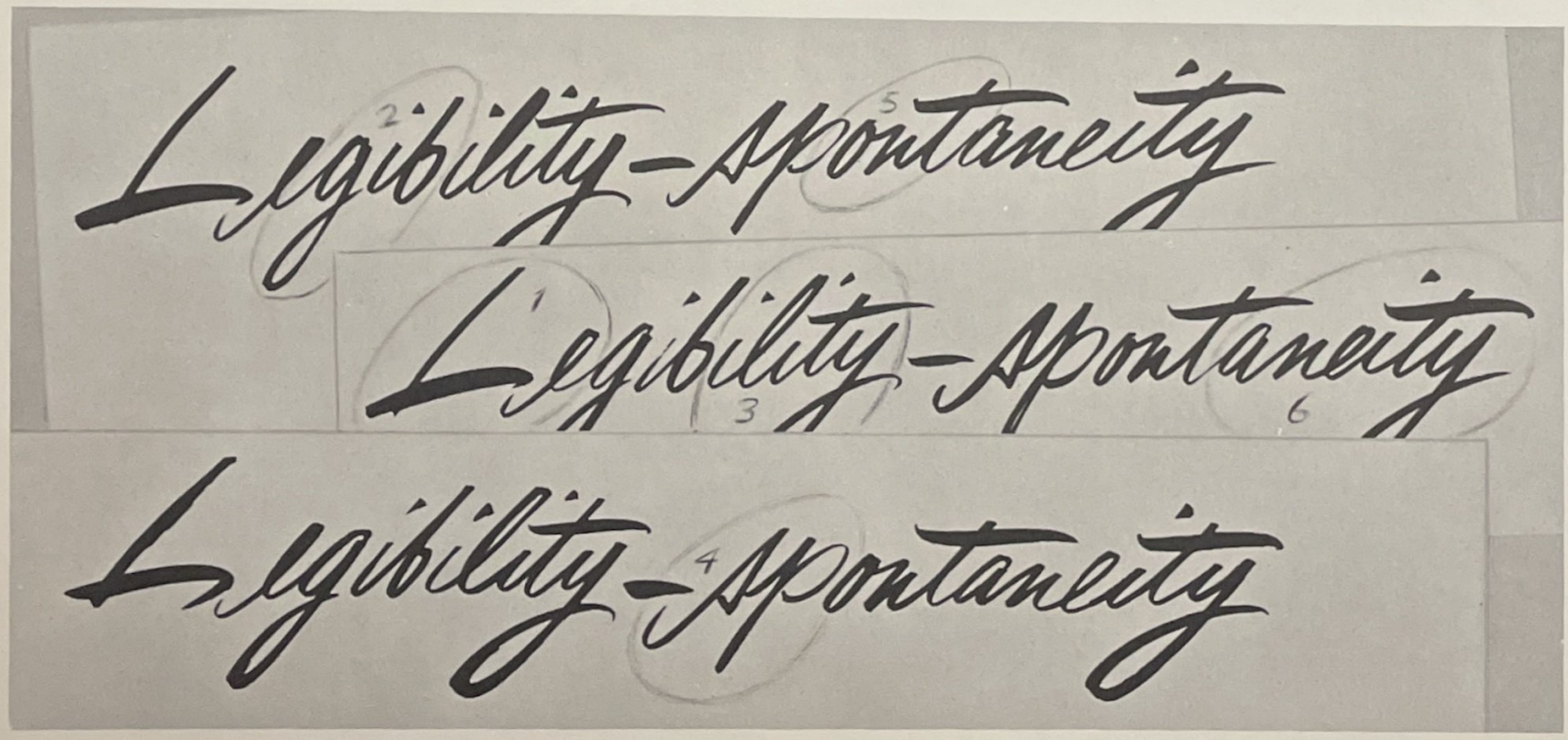
1 **Write it again and again:** With your brush and ink or lampblack and water, write the copy on sheets of thin paper many times until you get the desired effect. At this stage, design and freedom of expression should be your chief considerations. Be spontaneous in the way you write the words — and generous in the number of times you write them.

Brush script

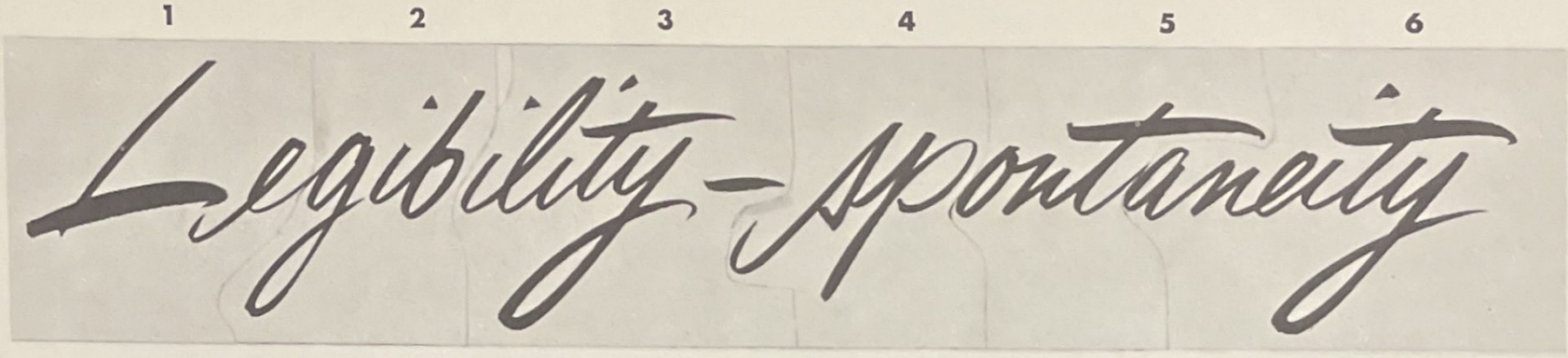
Brush script is a more casual and spontaneous version of the script we studied earlier. Because of its unique freshness, bounce, and vitality, it is widely used. In style it varies as much as handwriting – but, no matter how distinctive its design, like any good lettering, brush script must always be easy to read. You don't have to write a good hand to be able to do this kind of lettering well – in fact, you will often try many different styles of writing with the brush to achieve the effect you want.

The tools and materials you need for brush-script lettering are few and familiar. Set out a No. 2, No. 3, or No. 4 sable brush – some lampblack and water or a bottle of India ink – a supply of bond paper, one-ply Bristol, or any other good thin paper – and you are ready to begin. Many letterers find the brushes work better if the very fine tip is cut off with a razor blade. Don't draw guide lines – they'll only keep you from being free. Experiment with different-size brushes, different papers and styles of handwriting till you find the ones that suit you best.

Here we demonstrate how to make the kind of brush script we have been describing. In the first step you write the words many times, with great freedom. No one specimen is likely to be perfect, so in the following steps you select the best parts of the various words, cut them out, and then paste them together to form the well-designed and easily read line that is always your goal.

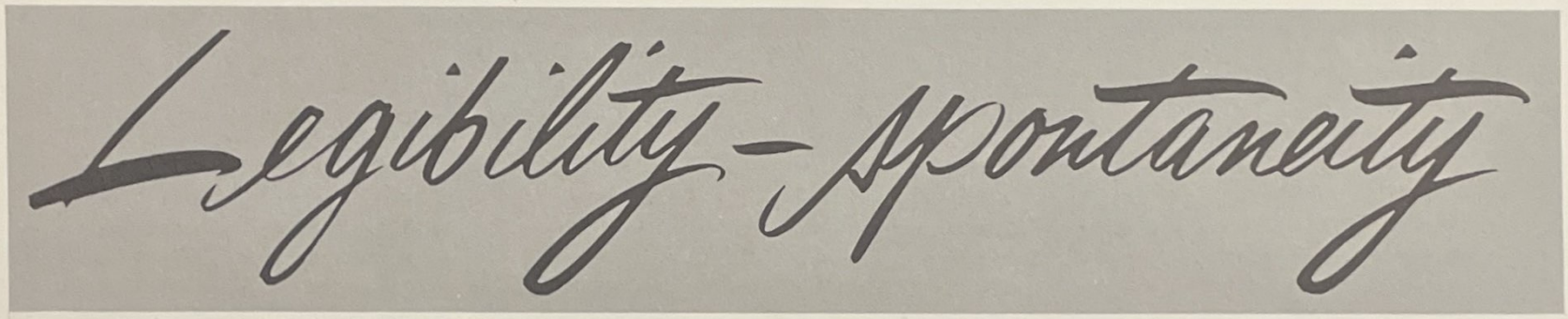


2 **Selecting the best parts:** Spread out the many lines you have written and select from various ones the words, parts of words, or letters which best express the spontaneous character you are seeking. Select only those sections that are easy to read and consistent in character, size, and weight. Here we have selected and numbered the sections to be put together for the finished job.



3 **Joining sections:** Cut out the selected sections and paste them down with rubber cement. Before it dries, move the sections about, to produce the proper spacing and alignment. After the cement dries, clean away the surplus and, with a brush and ink or paint, make necessary additions and adjustments. Don't worry about the edges of the sections — they will not show in the reproduction. In many cases this paste-up is used as the finished lettering. It may also be refined further, as described below.

4 **Negative photostat:** For a more exacting job, have a photostat negative made. With black paint or ink, paint out the section lines and make final adjustments in the lettering. You can also use retouch white on the letters.



5 **Positive photostat:** From the retouched negative have a glossy photostat positive made. This will be the finished art. Of course, you can make further improvements and refinements on the lettering at this stage if you wish.

Brush gothic

The procedure we have just shown for creating free, spontaneous brush script can also be used for animated styles of separated letters, often called brush gothic. The variety you can create is almost limitless. Always remember to make your letters readable.

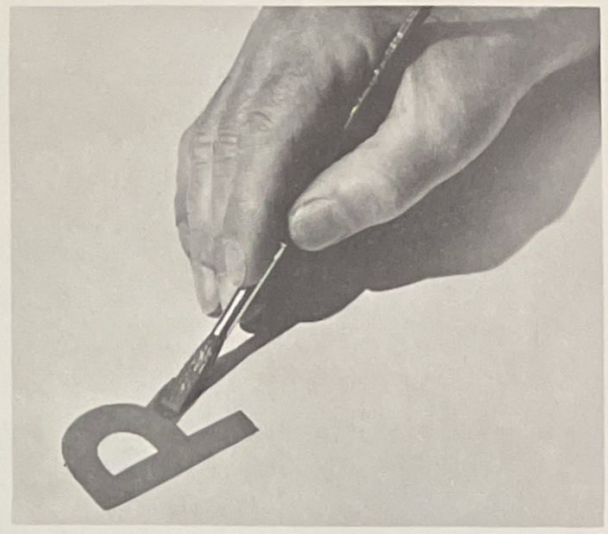
When you make a very casual and animated alphabet, forget guide lines. But you'd better use them if the letters are to be uniform in height like the examples at the bottom of this page.

Here are a few tips on using the brush for either brush script or separate brush letters. For light letters, have the brush pointed and don't use too much ink. Hold the brush almost vertical to the paper so the point just touches it. For heavy letters, use a worn and blunt-pointed brush or one from which you have cut the tip. Load the brush well with ink and hold it at a close angle to the paper so it will make a wide stroke.

It will take some practice for you to get the feel of the brush and learn to make the letters in various weights. As you practice, you will be pleasantly surprised to see the wide variety of styles you can create.

These words in brush gothic were made with a large blunt-pointed brush. They were lettered many times, and the best letters, groups of letters, or entire words were pasted up and retouched; then photostats were made. When you have gained sufficient skill you may avoid the paste-up procedure and letter words like these directly on the drawing paper.

Right



Wrong

Right way to hold the lettering brush: The lettering brush should be held at an almost vertical angle by the thumb and first two fingers. This vertical position gives great flexibility in moving the brush in all directions and permits you to stop it neatly and evenly at the end of a downstroke. This cannot be done when the brush is held at an angle close to the paper.
Wrong: Here the bristles are held very flat against the paper. This gives less control of the brush and makes it impossible to finish off the downstroke with a clean-cut edge.

Show-card writing

Show-card letterers often refer to their profession as "show-card writing." The term is an apt one, for an experienced letterer of show cards is so skillful and fast that he seems literally to write his signs. There is a wide market for his skill: nearly every store in every community has need for show cards and signs of various kinds and sizes. For the artist who letters well, this can be a good way to add to his income — or it may even be developed into a regular business.

Many students find that free-lance show-card writing helps them to improve their skill in lettering so they will be well equipped to do lettering for layouts or finished lettering for reproduction. Show cards are so varied in their requirements and the design is so often left to the lettering artist that they afford you a fine opportunity to experiment with the design of different kinds of letters and layouts. This can be an excellent way for you to develop and apply your ability to create new lettering forms and effects.

You can successfully combine your ability to draw and make pictures with your lettering. Many customers will want the extra touch your illustrations can give their show cards.

Tools and materials

Table. Most show-card writers prefer to work standing at a waist-high table with the top slightly slanted. A regular drawing table can be adjusted to serve very well. There should be a wood or metal strip along the front edge projecting at least a half-inch above the surface, to prevent the show cards from sliding off. It also serves as a support for the T-square when you rule or paint lines and prevents the T-square from rubbing and smearing the wet paint on your show cards.

Brushes. Two kinds of brushes are used: the rigger, which is a red sable lettering brush with a round ferrule, and the single-stroke brush with a flat ferrule.

The brush you will use most generally is the rigger brush. It comes in sizes ranging from No. 1 (very small) up to No. 12 (large). To begin with, a No. 2 and a No. 8 will serve most of your purposes. If you do a lot of show-card writing you will want to get some of the other sizes, too.

For large letters use a single-stroke lettering brush. These brushes vary in width from ⅛ of an inch to 1½ inches. The best-quality brushes are made of red sable and are quite expensive. An economical substitute is made of ox hair. Good sizes to start with are the ½ inch and the 1 inch. Take care of your brushes — wash them out thoroughly after each use and dry them with a soft rag.

Lettering surfaces. Show cards are written on a great variety of surfaces, ranging from thin paper through cardboard to thick wallboard. The most commonly used surface is white cardboard, which comes in sheets 22 x 28 inches, 30 x 40 inches, or 28 x 44 inches, and in many colors. The thickness varies from 6 to 14 ply, the 14 ply being the thickest and stiffest. The thick board is necessary only for cards that must be rigid or very large. Other surfaces such as wallboard, map board, mounting board and railroad or poster board can be used. For large signs and banners which will be fastened to a wall, use a white paper. It comes in rolls 10 to 100 yards long and 18 to 36 inches wide.

Pens. The most commonly used pen is the Speedball. These pens come with square, round, oval, and oblong tips. For large single-stroke letters there are Coit's ball-bearing lettering pens, which range in width from ⅛ of an inch to an inch. All of these pens are sold in sets of various sizes which contain a folder full of helpful suggestion on their use.

Show-card colors. Show-card paints, sometimes called poster paints, come in a great variety of colors and are available in 2-ounce, 8-ounce, and 16-ounce jars. Keep the jars tightly covered when not in use; otherwise the moisture evaporates and the paint becomes too thick. In this case, add a little water to thin it to its correct consistency. For pen lettering, dilute the poster paint or use one of the many good inks made especially for lettering pens.

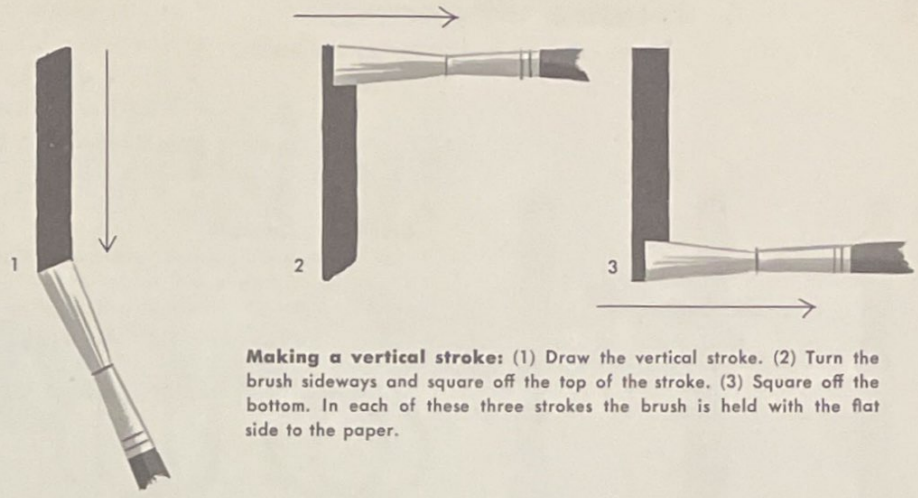
Other materials. You will need a yardstick, a T-square, and a mat knife for cutting your boards.

Making show-card letters

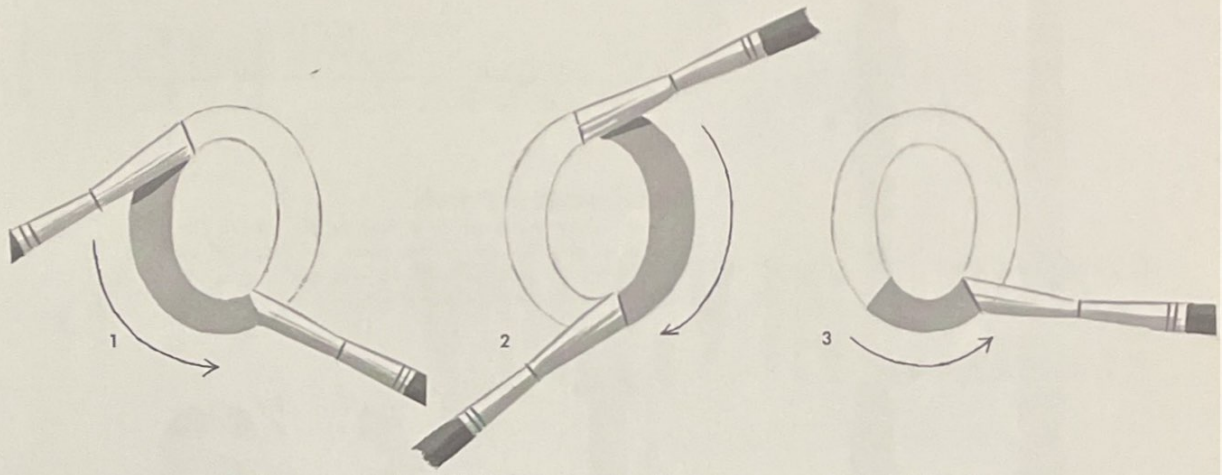
The most widely used letters in show-card writing are gothic alphabets or variations of them. This is because of their simplicity and the ease and speed with which they can be done. On this page we show you the fundamentals of making the straight and the curved strokes of the gothic alphabet. When you have learned to do these basic strokes you can combine them to make all the gothic letters.

The thick and thin strokes of roman letters are made by holding the brush in the same position as we explained for making Caslon letters. You use the brush very much as you do the chisel-point pencil.

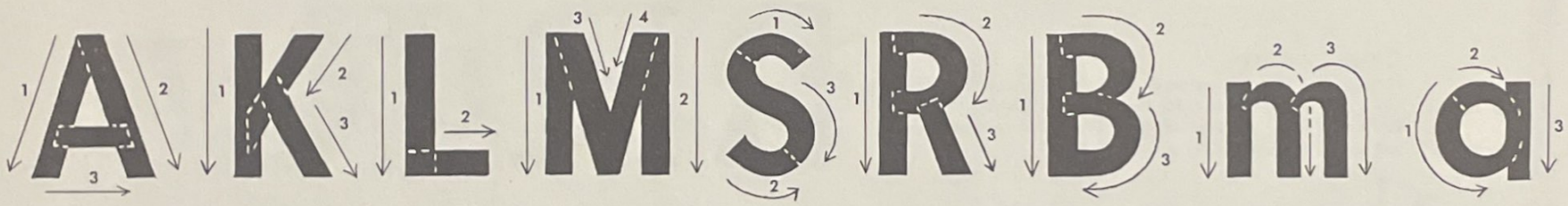
Before painting, dip the brush in your color and then work it out to a chisel-point edge by stroking it up and down on a palette made of a piece of smooth cardboard or glass. When the brush has the desired point, apply it to the drawing surface. As you see in the pictures at the bottom of this page, there are several ways of using the brush. We urge you to work in the manner that is most convenient and natural for you so long as you follow the basic principles we explain for making the different alphabets. Always keep your hand movement as free as possible, especially when your hand is resting on the surface of the show card. The movement of your brush should be produced by simultaneous actions of the fingers, wrist, and arm so that your strokes flow freely at all times.



Making a vertical stroke: (1) Draw the vertical stroke. (2) Turn the brush sideways and square off the top of the stroke. (3) Square off the bottom. In each of these three strokes the brush is held with the flat side to the paper.

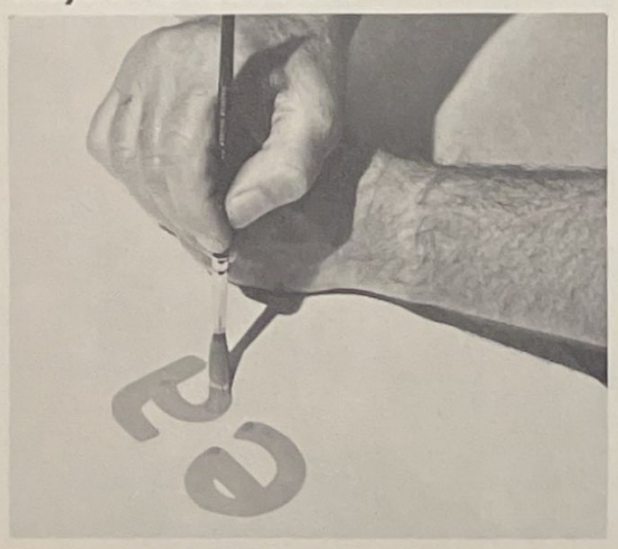


Making a curved gothic letter: Curved gothic letters are made by holding the ferrule of the brush between the thumb and forefinger and twirling it. Here we show you how to make the O, which contains all the strokes you will use in making any other curved gothic letter. (1) Make the left-hand side of the O by twirling the brush. (2) Still twirling the brush, stroke in the right-hand side of the O. (3) Connect the two strokes at the bottom.



Combining strokes: Here we show you how to combine straight strokes and straight and curved strokes to create nine typical letters. Note the direction and sequence of the strokes and how they overlap. Other letters of the gothic alphabet are made much the same way.

Ways to use the brush



Overhand method: By resting one hand on the other you can swing the letters in more freely. No part of the letter is hidden from view as you form it, which makes it easier to control.

Use of the mahlstick: For lettering on windows and walls it is helpful to have a mahlstick to support and steady your hand. A rigid yardstick or walking cane can serve as substitutes for the real thing.

Free-arm method: For large letters, stand at a waist-high table and use a free-arm movement.

Creating different show-card lettering effects

You can create many different effects with the show-card letterer's brush. These effects are greatly influenced by the amount of paint with which you load your brush. Below we demonstrate some of the styles of letters you can make, and give you pointers on how much paint to use in order to make them.

Loaded brush

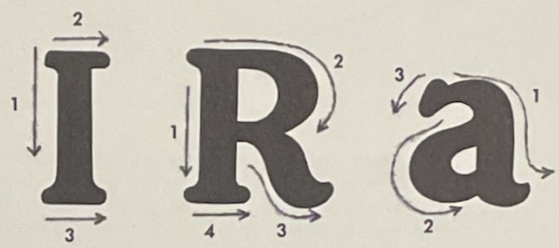
Load the brush with as much color as it will hold without dripping, and keep it well loaded at all times. This is good for letters with strokes of uniform width with round ends and for serifs with round ends.

ARG ae

OUTLINE

Semiloaded brush

In this method the brush is stroked on the palette just enough to give the end of the brush the shape of an ellipse. This is useful where thick and thin strokes are needed and the serifs and strokes have rounded ends.



Script

BALLOON

heavy

Chisel point

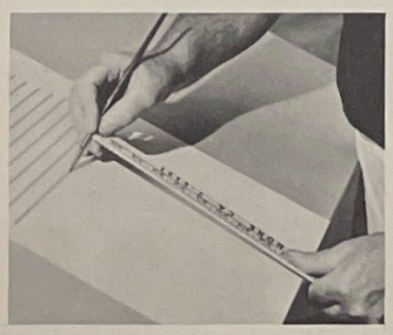
In this method the brush is stroked on the palette until it has a sharp, crisp chisel point, with no excess paint. It is useful in making all crisp letters, especially letters which call for sharp corners at the end of the strokes.

RRR

hek SANS-SERIF *or* thick-thins

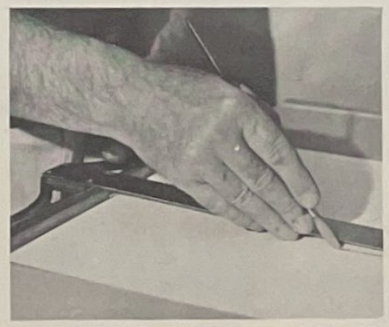
Show-card striping

Often a show card requires a border, underscoring of words, or a line to serve some practical or decorative purpose. Below are four common ways of painting these lines.

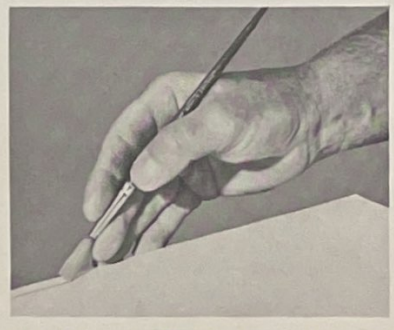


Yardstick method: Hold the yardstick with forefinger of left hand against front edge of table. With right hand hold brush (or pencil) against end of yardstick — third finger keeps rule at right height. Draw yardstick along card by moving both hands simultaneously.

Bridge method: A bridge is a straight-edge supported by two blocks of wood at the ends. Hold the brush between the thumb and first two fingers. The third and fourth fingers serve as a guide.



T-square method: The brush is held between the thumb and first two fingers. The third and fourth fingers serve as a guide along the edge of the T-square.



Card-edge method: While holding the brush between the thumb and the first two fingers, use the third and fourth fingers as a guide along the edge of the card.

VARIETY in design

Variety in design

VARIETY *in design*

Variety in design VARIETY IN DESIGN

VARIETY in design

VARIETY in design

Variety in design

Creative lettering

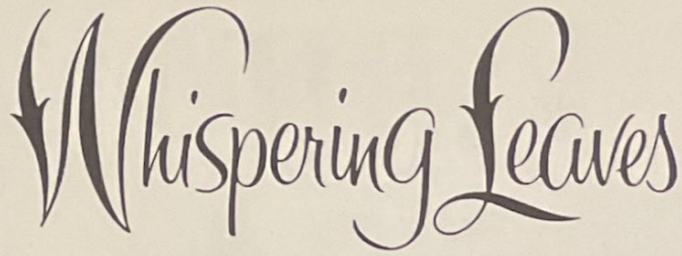
There is no limit to the use of imagination and sensitivity in designing a line of lettering. Always begin a job by studying every aspect of the layout in which your lettering is to appear, so that it will be appropriate and fully expressive of the mood and character of the subject matter. Obviously you would not want to use coarse, heavy lettering to express a very delicate, feminine subject, or delicate lettering to express a strong, dramatic theme.

Not only must you choose a style of lettering that is consistent with the subject, but you must also relate your lettering to the other design elements in the layout. Sometimes you may do this with letters whose line of movement is harmonious with the other elements, or you may find it desirable to design letters that will provide a contrast – a relief from the other elements. For example, in an ad which contains a lot of graceful, free-flowing forms – perhaps silhouette drawings of delicate clothing accessories – you might feel a need for rather firm, solid letters that will act as a balance to all the visual activity in the drawings.

On this page we show you a few examples of the many ways in which three words can be treated. If space permitted, it would be possible to show dozens of other treatments. We want to emphasize how much creative freedom you will have in approaching most lettering problems. This statement, however, is not intended to weaken the emphasis we have placed on the need to understand thoroughly the fundamental letter forms and the principles of correct letter, word, and line spacing. It is absolutely necessary for you to have a complete grasp of these basic fundamentals before you can take creative liberties with them successfully. Our purpose in this lesson has been to teach you these fundamentals so that you will have a sound foundation on which to build all kinds of creative lettering – creative lettering that expresses in its design the content and subject matter of the page on which it appears and at the same time is quickly and easily read.

Creating appropriate styles of lettering

On this page you see a number of examples of lettering designed to interpret the subject or mood expressed by the word or words. In every case the style of lettering is appropriate in design — and it is also easy to read. No matter how original and beautiful you make your lettering, always remember to make it readable, too.



A suggestion of leaves has been worked into the capitals with delicacy and restraint. When you use designs in letters, be careful not to overdo it lest the design overpower the letter.

The shadow effect gives these letters a three-dimensional appearance, like raised letters carved on a stone monument.

Like jazz music, the letters here are bold and vigorous in design and are spaced and staggered in an unconventional way.

The letters are heavy, forceful ones. They are arranged on a slightly curving line and linked, which suggests determined movement.

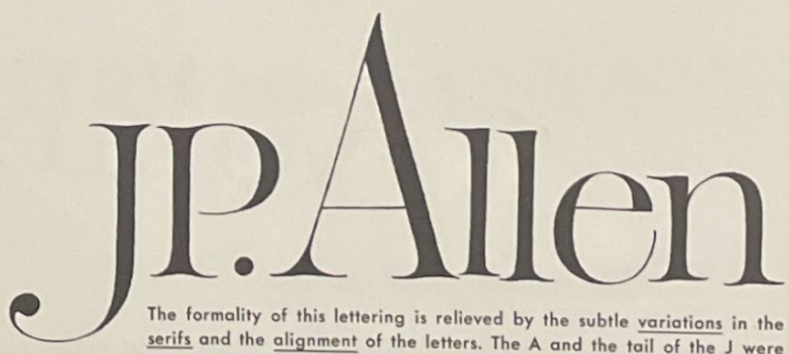
The lettering had to be feminine — yet bold enough to stand out on a page. A form of broad-pen lettering was used with a flourish to the L. "Pump," done in Bodoni-like lettering, accentuates the slant in "Lotus."

The animated decorations suggest color. The shadow on the right and lower sides of the letters defines their forms.

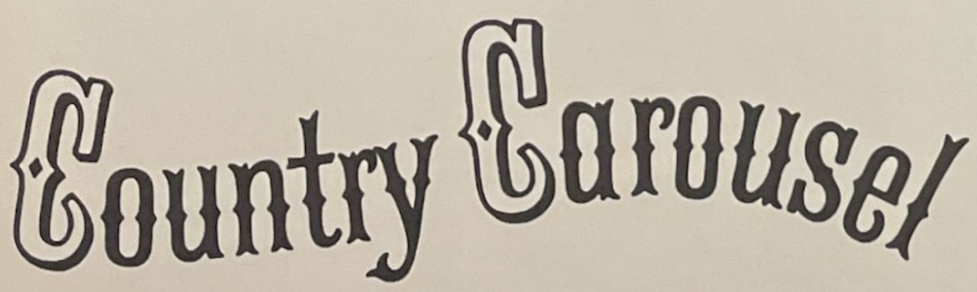
In this stylized interpretation of feminine handwriting the letters are varied in width to give a change of pace.

The trade name is both bold and feminine — bold because of the heavy strokes and feminine because of the light serifs and thin strokes. The script makes a welcome contrast and emphasizes the delicate feminine nature of the product.

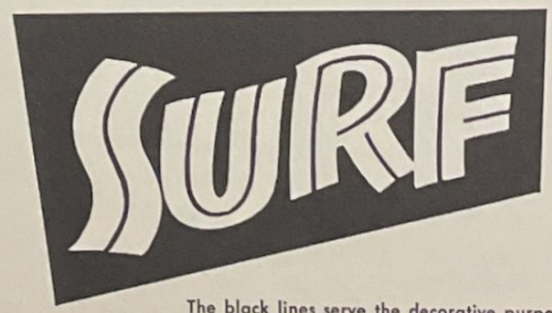
This ghostlike effect was created by drawing on white blotting paper with a pen heavily loaded with black ink. It was pulled along the paper at an uneven pace, making a wider mark where it moved slower. A negative photostat was then made, giving us white lettering on a black background.



The formality of this lettering is relieved by the subtle variations in the serifs and the alignment of the letters. The A and the tail of the J were exaggerated to add variety.



The words suggest gay, old-fashioned doings — so the choice of these old-fashioned letters was a happy one. The big outlined C's add excitement, as does the flowing curve of the words.



The black lines serve the decorative purpose of imitating the movement of the surf. At the same time they give the letters originality.

FAMOUS ARTISTS COURSE
Student work
Lesson 17
Lettering

HOW TO PRACTICE AND PREPARE FOR THIS LESSON

The purpose of this lesson is to teach you the fundamentals of lettering. This includes the typical alphabets, letter and word spacing, layout and finished lettering and creative variations of standard alphabets.

Lettering is a craft as well as an art, so the more you practice the more you will benefit from this lesson. Only by making your hand repeat and refine letters and words many times can you acquire the skill a good letterer must have. So do the following exercises as often as you can.

1. To learn the basic alphabet on page 6, remove the page from the binder and insert it under the top sheet of a visualizing pad. Draw light horizontal guide lines with a pencil and T-square, then trace the letters until you thoroughly understand the caps and lower-case letters. Next, on another sheet of paper, draw guide lines and practice drawing the letters without tracing them. Follow this same procedure of first tracing and then drawing freehand, to learn the thick and thin roman alphabet on pages 10 and 11; the Caslon on pages 12 and 13; the italics on page 21; the gothics on pages 22 and 23 and the script on page 24. (Although, as explained on page 4, a steel T-square and triangle are ideal, you can do your work for this lesson with the T-square and triangle you already have.)

2. With a chisel-point pencil, as shown on pages 18 and 19, letter headlines or sentences in different sizes of Caslon, Caslon italics, gothic and script to gain experience in putting the correct amount of space between letters, words and lines. A good way to check your spacing and the "color" of your lettering is to look at the tracing upside down or turn the sheet over, hold it to the light and see it in reverse. When you examine your lettering this way, you will easily see where you have "holes" or dark areas.

3. Select some of your better pencil lettering done for the above practice and, following the method shown on pages 32 through 35, make finished lettering from it.

4. Experiment with some of the tools shown on page 29. Practice broad-pen lettering by first tracing over the alphabet on page 37 and then drawing it freehand. In addition to the Hunt pen, try some of the tools on page 36.

5. After you have gained reasonable skill and confidence in lettering in Caslon, Caslon italics, script and gothic, experiment with the more free and creative styles of lettering such as brush script on pages 38 and 39 and creative lettering on pages 43 and 44.

THE ASSIGNMENTS YOU ARE TO SEND IN FOR CRITICISM

ASSIGNMENT 1. On visualizing or layout paper, letter in pencil the slogan:

NEW FUELS FOR INDUSTRY
Better Products for the world!

Plan the slogan to fill two lines, each one about 8 inches long. Letter the four words of the first line in upper-case News Gothic (see page 23). Do the second line in Caslon. Make the words "Better Products" in Caslon lower-case italics (page 21) with the first letter of each word -- the B and P -- capitalized. Letter the rest of the words in lower-case Caslon roman (page 13). Render the slogan in four steps as shown on page 28. Starting with the rough-rough, refine your lettering with step-by-step tracings on successive sheets of paper. Use chisel-point pencils for your rendering.

Send in the final three steps of lettering, the rough, semi-rough, and comp. Trim them to a convenient size, and mount them neatly on an 11 x 14-inch piece of board or heavy paper.

Mark this work -- ASSIGNMENT 1.

ASSIGNMENT 2. With pencil, on a sheet of 11 x 14-inch visualizing paper, do an example of layout lettering consisting of two words:

Regal
COLAWEAR

(over, please)

The first word, "Regal," should be done in formal script and look like the lettering you see on pages 24 and 25. The first letter should be capitalized -- the rest of the word lower-case. Make the word about 4 inches long. Base your lettering on the formal script alphabet shown on page 24.

The second word, "COLAWEAR," should be 8 inches long, and lettered in upper-case Caslon (see page 12). Do this as single stroke chisel point layout lettering. Center the word "Regal" above "COLAWEAR."

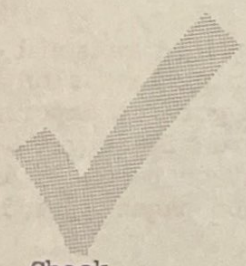
Mark this sheet -- ASSIGNMENT 2.

ASSIGNMENT 3. This is an assignment in finished lettering. Slip Assignment 2 under the top sheet of your tracing pad and carefully refine the letter spacing and the letter forms, following the directions beginning with step 3, page 33. Continue to follow the step-by-step procedure through step 9 on page 35. Notice that the finished refined letters in Step 9 on page 35 are quite different than the blocking in shown in step 2 on page 33. Your finished lettering, in ink, should be done on a piece of 11 x 14-inch Bristol board or smooth-surfaced illustration board.

Mark this sheet -- ASSIGNMENT 3.

Your instructor will study your work to see if you:

- --Know the caps and lower-case letters of Caslon, Caslon italics, script and gothic faces.
- --Have developed the skill to draw them in pencil for layouts and to render them in ink for finished art.
- --Can space letters, words and lines effectively.



Check
before mailing

IMPORTANT: Be sure to letter your name, address and student number neatly at the lower left-hand corner of each assignment. In the lower right corner, place the lesson number and assignment number.

Your lesson carton should contain:

Assignment 1
Assignment 2
Assignment 3
1 Return shipping label filled out completely

Mail this carton to:
FAMOUS ARTISTS COURSE, WESTPORT, CONN.